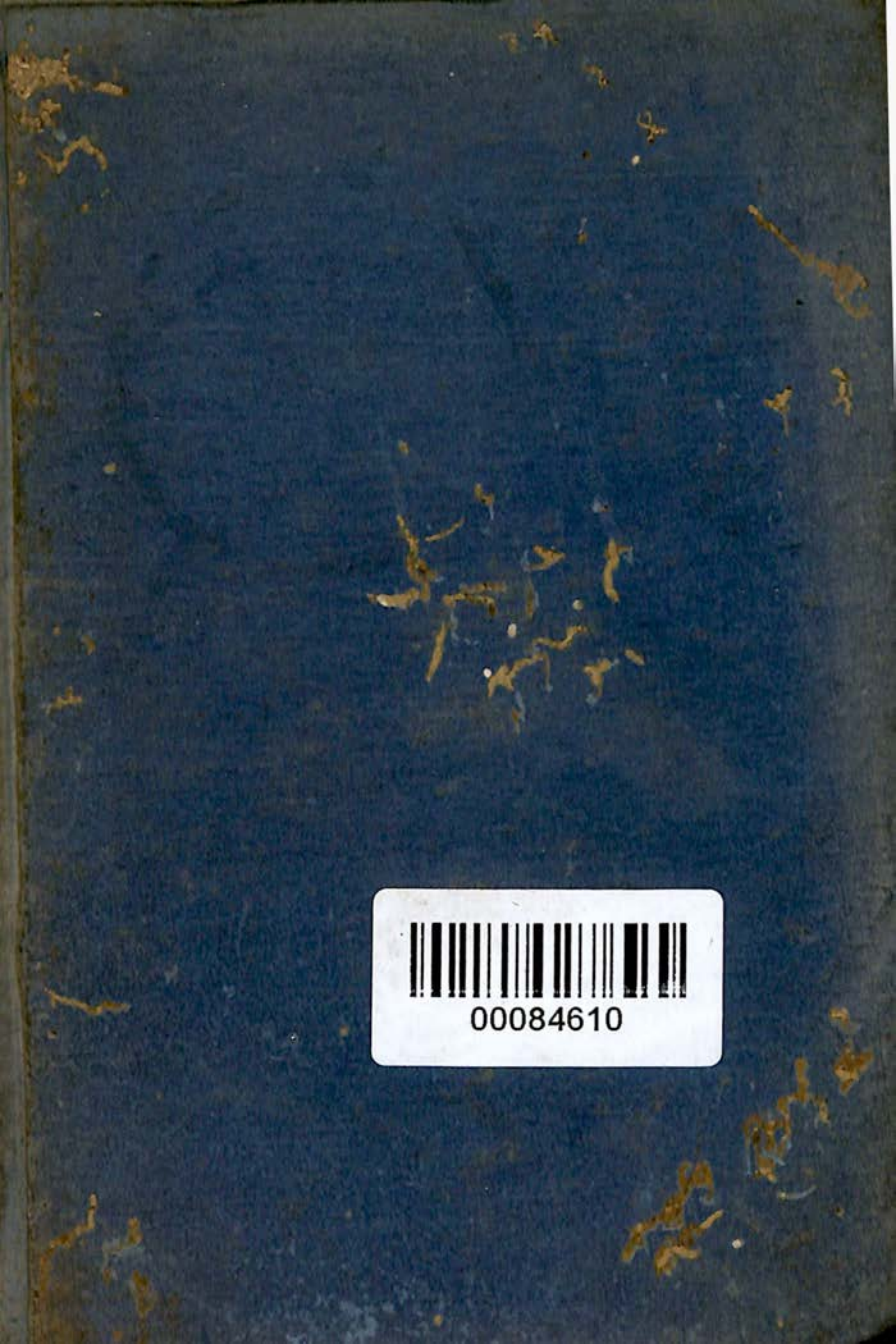
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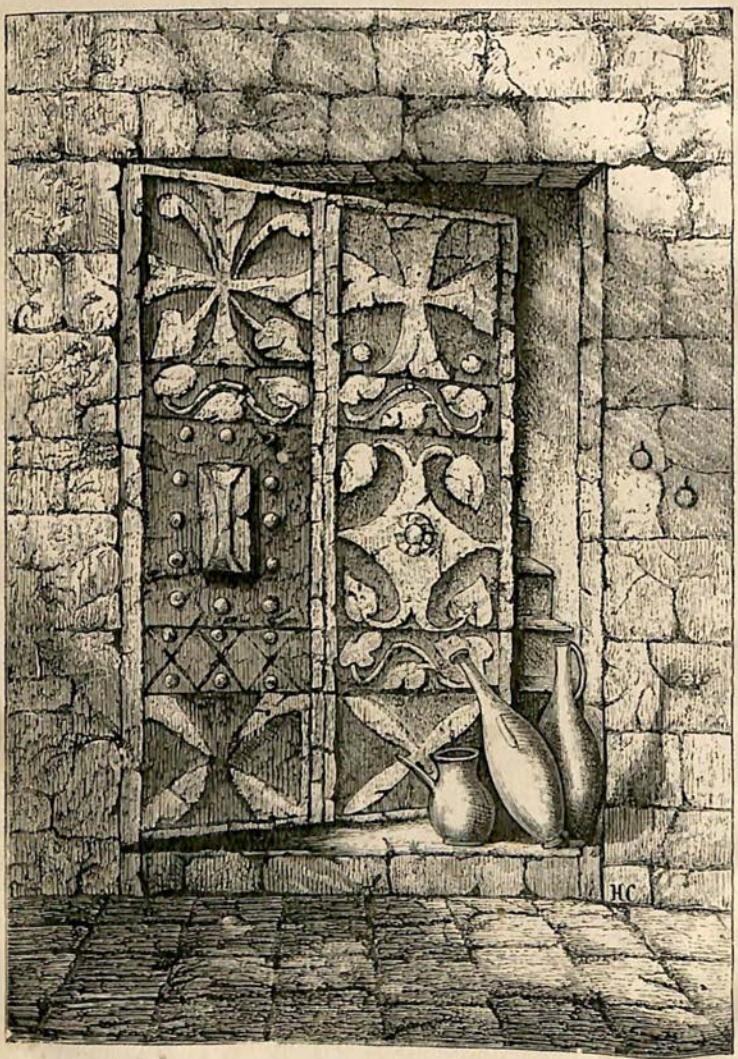

CARVED STONE DOOR.

VOL. I. P. 192.

OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY.

BY

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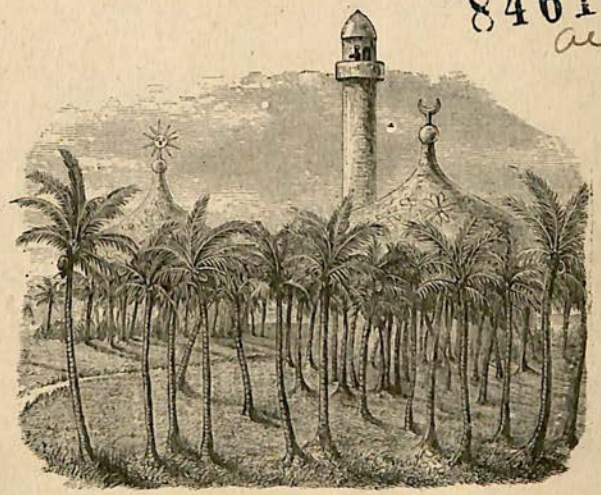

MOSQUES NEAR BAGHDAD.

TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE interest that is felt by all in the Eastern Question must be my excuse for publishing the following pages. In them I endeavour to describe the incidents of a journey through a district which, though now in many parts waste and desolate, is, I feel sure, destined, and that at no distant date, to become as it was in days of yore, the great highway between the East and the West.

For the historical notices of the places through which we passed, I am indebted to

the works of Canon Rawlinson, Gibbon, Ockley, and others, and if any errors are to be found they must be ascribed to my own want of knowledge rather than to any inaccuracies on the part of my authorities.

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OUR FUTURE HIGHWAY.

Map of
THE COUNTRIES BETWEEN
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AND
INDIA
Syrian Desert
ARABIA
Euphrates
Tigris
Persian Gulf
ARABIAN SEA
Red Sea
Nile
Dead Sea
Jordan
Sinai
Palmyra
Bagdad
Basra
Mosul
Aleppo
Damascus
Jerusalem
Cairo
Suez
Alexandria
Gaza
Beersheba
Petra
Mecca
Medina
Muscat
Aden
Hodeida
Bushire
Shiraz
Ispahan
Kerman
Persepolis
Susa
Babylon
Nineveh
Ur
Haran
Tadmor
Baalbec
Sidon
Tyre
Acre
Jaffa
Ascalon
Hebron
Jericho
Gilead
Bashan
Moab
Edom
Midian
Sinai
Horeb
Kadesh
Rameses
Goshen
Memphis
Thebes
Sais
Tanis
Pelusium
Heliopolis
Arabia Petræa
Arabia Deserta
Arabia Felix
Mesopotamia
Assyria
Babylonia
Chaldea
Persia
Media
Elam
Phœnicia
Palestine
Judea
Samaria
Galilee
Idumea
Egypt
Lower Egypt
Upper Egypt
Nubia
Abyssinia
Ethiopia
Libya
Cyrenaica
Africa
Europe
Asia
Mediterranean Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
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Indian Ocean
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Caspian Sea
Euxine
Propontis
Hellespont
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Adriatic Sea
Ionian Sea
Sicily
Crete
Cyprus
Rhodes
Malta
Italy
Greece
Turkey
Asia Minor
Armenia
Cappadocia
Pontus
Bithynia
Galatia
Lycaonia
Pisidia
Lycia
Caria
Ionia
Mysia
Troas
Phrygia
Lydia
Pamphylia
Cilicia
Isauria
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Colchis
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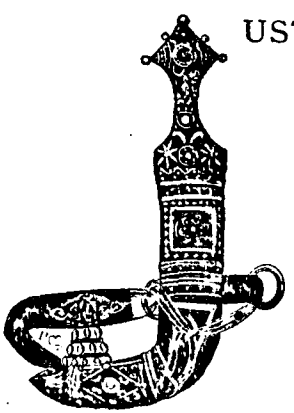
Wilderness of Kadesh
Wilderness of Wandering
Wilderness of Shur
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Zin
Wilderness of Judea
Wilderness of Kadesh
Wilderness of Wandering

CHAPTER I.

Sir Frederick Goldsmid — Railway communication — Admiralty leave—A Chaldean gentleman—Medical outfit—Heavy baggage—*Orontes*—A mixed multitude—Island of Venus—A welcome addition—Irish hospitality—Sea-sickness—A perfect Adonis—Passengers—Suahili stories—Gibraltar—Eucalypti—Malta—Church of St. John—Sir Harry Keppel—Fellowes—Larnaca—An hotel—Over-zealous officials—A *table d'hôte*—Italian *tratoria*—Don Pasquale—A polyglot restaurant—Start for Nicosia—Greek village—Roads—Kismet—Huge doors—Sir Garnet's head-quarters.



JUST before Sir Frederick Goldsmid delivered his lecture on our communications with India at the United Service Institution, and the Duke of Sutherland formed his association for the promotion of the Euphrates valley railway, I had my attention turned to

the same regions, being persuaded that the course political affairs were taking in the East would, sooner or later, render the establishment of railway communication between the Persian Gulf (and ultimately our Indian possessions) and the coast of the Mediterranean more and more of an imperial necessity.

The acquisition of Cyprus, and the Anglo-Turkish convention occurring soon after I had begun to think seriously about the matter, decided me upon going myself to see what were the facilities which might aid, and the difficulties which might stand in the way of, such an undertaking. So in the end of September, 1878, having completed my arrangements for travel, and obtained the necessary permission from "their Lords Commissioners,"—still worded in quaint old English, and prohibiting me from taking service under any foreign prince or potentate,—I gave the rendezvous at Cyprus to two gentlemen who were to accompany me, and at Portsmouth to a much-praised individual, recommended to

me as a Chaldean gentleman desirous of travelling in the East, said good-bye to my family, and went up to London.

Here I met my old friend Bird who had kindly superintended all my medical outfit, besides compiling a small and handy book of instruction for my guidance in cases of illness or accident. I also met one of my would-be companions, and gave him full directions as to route, &c., so that he might arrive at Cyprus at the same time as myself. As his heavy baggage—heavy is the right name—was shipped with mine on board the *Orontes*, I made sure that he would turn up safe and sound and to time; but the fates willed it otherwise, as from that day to this I have heard nothing more of him.

After my farewells I went down to Portsmouth, where I found the Chaldean safely arrived, and next morning a quiet stroll of a few minutes took us to the *Orontes*, on board which ship their lordships had granted me a passage to Cyprus, and which was lying

with her steam up alongside the great troop jetty.

Here I found my baggage and ammunition was safely stowed on board, and everything ready for starting. A mixed multitude we were: drafts for Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus; naval officers for the Mediterranean squadron, amongst them a lot of youngsters and six Chinese sub-lieutenants; dockyard officials for Malta; two ladies and their children, the first to brave the pestilential (?) island of Venus; and also wives and children of officers for Malta and Gibraltar. Our first destination was Queenstown, where we were to add to our number, and where Dr. Moss, late of the *Alert*, came on board, and formed a welcome addition to our party.

Irish hospitality at the Yacht Club, and elsewhere, was, as usual, genially exercised, and it was with a feeling of real friendship for the acquaintances of a day that we steamed out of the Cove of Cork outward bound. The little time we had been at Queenstown had sufficed to put the Chaldean on his legs

again, he having been prostrate from the moment we left Portsmouth till we anchored, and keeping on sending for me to reiterate his assurances that he would die. As I have never heard of a death from sea-sickness, I did not put much faith in what he said; and when at the first glad heave of the ship as she emerged on to the wide Atlantic from between the protecting headlands of the Cove, he was again on the flat of his back, I was hard-hearted enough to tell him he should get up and walk about. A day or two saw him all right, and then he showed that the lines on which he was built were more adapted for stowage than speed.

A curious-looking little squat fat man he was with an enormous face, in which the mouth usurped the greater portion, swarthy complexion, thick lips, heavy eyebrows, snub nose, and pendulous cheeks, the vast expanse of which was occasionally shaved, showing on other days a stubbly waste like Hotspur's dandy lord. Round-shouldered and bow-kneed,

with enormous hands and feet, he still thought himself a perfect Adonis and a regular lady-killer. He attempted his captivating powers among the ladies'-maids, and when repulsed put down his want of success to their want of cultivated tastes. Like the semi-Europeanised Oriental generally, he was a failure, but his pretensions were so great that I still believed in him; afterwards he was found out.

Enough of the Chaldean. Amongst the passengers and officers we had materials for a pleasant society; one artilleryman was an artist, and had with him sketch-books filled with reminiscences from all parts of the world; some comical and some serious, but which amongst a varied party like ours gave rise to many an interesting conversation. My old friend Hammick, going out as commander of the *Invincible*, was invaluable to the ladies and children, and equally welcome with the other sex on account of his dry humour and quaint sayings. Moss, with his store of reading and experience, led the way in all scientific conversation. Many

who fancy that among soldiers and sailors there is not much taste for such discussions, would have been astonished to hear how much was known, and how apt and true were many of the remarks.

I was installed as storyteller to the children, of whom there were many on board, and the delight with which they listened to quaint Suahili stories quite repaid me for the trouble of telling them. The difference between my little audience and the stately Arabs and wild negroes who had listened to the same anecdotes in many an African camp or village —between the surroundings of a man-of-war's quarter-deck, and the grass or mud huts where I was the only European, was sufficiently striking to make me think of what curious changes this little drama we call life, a mere speck in the infinite, is composed.

Gibraltar was reached without adventure, and we landed many of our passengers. Our stay was very short, and I was unable to see much of the changes which had been

effected since I had last passed by eight years before.

Moss and I went to see with what success the planting of the Eucalyptus had been attended. All the trees seemed drooping; the rocky hill-sides, exposed to the full force of the southern and western sun, did not appear adapted to the trees which have wrought such a beneficent change in other parts of the world.

On again to Malta, the ancient home of the Knights of St. John, and one of the bulwarks of Christianity against the encroachments of the conquering Moslem, and now one of those British strongholds which visibly show the strength and power of the little island in the north-western seas. The Church of St. John called upon me, as a pilgrim, to pay it a visit, and what thoughts of the past it recalled. There was no time to renew my acquaintance with other spots rendered sacred by their traditions.

At the Union Club I met Sir Harry Keppel,

luckily somewhat recovered from his accident, who hearing where I was going and what I proposed doing, gave me a hearty God-speed. Curiously enough, Fellowes, commander of the *Minotaur*, an old messmate, who, as first lieutenant of the *Briton*, had assisted me in my start from Zanzibar, and had welcomed me at Madeira in the *Minotaur*, on my way home after my tramp across unknown Africa, came out of hospital here to take passage to Cyprus to rejoin his ship.

A few more days and we arrived in the roadstead of Larnaca, still a scene of bustle and hard work for the navy, though strangely quiet considering the feverish energy which had accompanied the landing of the troops on the first ocupation only three months before.

Here I found Schaefer, one of the two who had engaged to meet me, but of my other proposed companion not a word. Schaefer told me that he had got quarters for us at an hotel conducted on the most peculiar principles. When he reached the island he was

directed to the house, and on arriving asked for a room. "If you go up stairs and find one empty, you can have it," was the reply of the proprietor. I thought this very odd, but it did not prepare me for what I actually found.

Schaefer had brought off a boat, and we soon got our traps into it and landed. At first we had some trouble about the Custom-house, which was waking up into life after having slumbered so long under the Turkish rule, and over-zealous officials wanted to open my baggage on the beach. However, I dug out a superior officer, and soon convinced him of the absurdity of examining things only landed for a few days, and private baggage into the bargain.

I now found that no porters or carts were to be hired to carry the things to the hotel, so I had to fall back on the naval officer in charge of the beach, and got a party of blue-jackets from him and a cart from the Commissariat, and so went cheerily up to the hotel. Here I found matters as Schaefer had described.

Rooms there were with beds in them, and therefore to be called bed-rooms, but otherwise well-nigh bare of furniture. If one wanted to wash, one was told, "There's the well, and there's the bucket," and was forced to draw and carry one's own water up stairs for tub and everything. Meals at first were not provided; after a few days what was called a *table d'hôte* was established, but the cookery was detestable. At other times than those named for meals, which were not punctual, nothing was obtainable; if anything was asked for, the humble applicant was told "It's not the proper time for tea," or whatever he might want. No wonder if, under these circumstances, we fed at an Italian *tratoria* hard by, where all the waifs and strays of immigrants into Cyprus were wont to congregate. Don Pasquale, as the proprietor was usually called, was an original, and more nearly solved the problem of perpetual motion than any one I ever saw.

No coat or waistcoat, shirt-sleeves tucked

up, slipshod slippers and a touzled head, were what most struck one in his personal appearance. Waiter, accountant, and proprietor, his only assistants were his wife and cook. He had to answer six or seven different questions in different languages at the same time, and in consequence, when he did have a chance of talking less hurriedly, he still made a *pot pourri* of the languages he knew—Greek, French, Turkish, Arab, German, and English, would all be jumbled together in one sentence.

At times when his room was full, he would be seen scudding across, carrying half-a-dozen different people's plates, and dealing them out like a conjuror dealing cards, his body going forwards whilst his head would be turned backwards to shout some new order he had just received, to his cook, and in some extraordinary and indescribable way letting yet another fresh arrival know that he had heard and understood his wishes. Of course order and tranquillity did not exist in this polyglot restaurant, but the cooking, of its kind, was not

bad, and we soon found out the times when there was the least noise and company, and Don Pasquale and his wife looked upon us as people to be favoured, and I am afraid often served us out of our turn, and left other of their clients to wait till they had provided us with what we wanted.

After the tratoria, we used to go to a *café* on the quay a short way off, close to where Mr. Truefit has established himself, and have a cup of coffee and a nargileh. So far our lodging and messing arrangements, though not luxurious, were amusing and sufficient, and as soon as we were fairly settled, I looked about for means to go up to Nicosia to call on Sir Garnet Wolseley, to whom a firman from the Sublime Porte granting me permission to roam at will through the Turkish dominions, was to be sent.

I found that one could either go by diligence or on mules, and being told the latter were the quickest and best, we set about obtaining them.

On inquiry we found that the municipality

had established a tariff considerably in excess of what the animals would have been hired for before the advent of the British, but still doing away with the necessity of bargaining and chaffering over the matter.

We engaged a couple of mules, and their owner mounted on another to show us the way. We strapped the necessaries for a night behind our saddles, and started, leaving the Chaldean in charge of our baggage, though he seemed to think that it was rather beneath his dignity to be left behind, and that he would have added *éclat* to our *cortége* if he had accompanied us.

Cyprus has now been so well described that I will not inflict on the reader anything about our ride. At the half-way halting-place, though there was a *café*, our guide took us to his own house, where his wife prepared us a meal of eggs and a sort of sausage, which was not at all bad, grapes for dessert, and tolerable coffee afterwards. The people certainly seem well-to-do, and though their houses are not as clean or tidy as English cottages, I should fancy that

they were really much better off in all material matters. Many things of course which, owing to the march of civilisation, are considered indispensable in England, they had not, but never having even heard of them, they do not feel their want.

Man and beast having been refreshed, we proceeded on our way, and were not sorry when the towers and minarets of Nicosia hove in sight, as the day had been hot and the road dusty and monotonous. Signs of the English were, however, rife in gangs of men repairing and levelling the road, a thing which would never have been dreamt of under the Turks, who, in most cases, let any public work go to ruin before completion; and, even if they do find sufficient energy to complete it, consider that then they have done enough, and whatever happens afterwards must be ascribed to Kismet.

Entering Nicosia by a tunnel-like gateway guarded by huge doors plated with iron and studded with nails, we wound our way through

its narrow streets and arcaded bazaars to the further side; traces of its occupation by the marines and blue-jackets were to be seen in the names of the ships in the squadron painted up over the gates, and the signs of the places calling themselves hotels.

Passing out of the town by another gate, we found ourselves on an open plain and Sir Garnet's head-quarters in sight. All the offices were in the buildings of a Greek convent, whilst tents were pitched for mess and sleeping.

CHAPTER II.

Firman—Matters civil and military—Laws—Fiscal arrangements—Percentage of sickness—Return to Larnaca—Chaldean ill—The old Guard—Castan Bey—Inducements to visit Limasol—Search for animals—An auctioneer—A diminutive tat—*Jambières*—Marketing—A night ride—A lunatic?—Arrival at a village—Quarters for the night—Halt for breakfast—Olive harvest—Quaint receptacles—Castan's coat—A comfortable meal—An ancient fountain—Carob harvest—Old ruins and metamorphic rocks—Dire disorder—Castan's wife—A friendly Greek—Collection of antiquities—Phœnician glass—Reckless destruction—Jeremiads—Fear and trembling—A night sail—A day's halt—Zie—Tired mules—Telegraph cable—Start for Beirut—Hôtel de l'Orient.

We were kindly welcomed by Sir Garnet, Lord Gifford, and the rest of the staff, and obtained the firman which was to pass us through the Turkish dominions in Asia. If Cyprus was unhealthy and enervating, it certainly had not made its mark on Sir Garnet and those around him, who all seemed as

energetic as if only a week from England. He was fully occupied with all the thousand and one matters civil and military entailed by the occupation of a new country, and putting the ponderous machine of Government into motion and maintaining it in working order.

Cyprus had previously been as little governed as most other parts of the Turkish empire; the laws, mostly good in themselves, had been allowed to remain a dead letter, whilst the fiscal arrangements had been such that it appeared as if they were intended to abolish revenue altogether instead of fostering it and causing it to increase. When the rearrangements proposed are carried into effect the island is sure to rapidly increase in prosperity, and with the abolition of bribery and corruption the industries which are now well-nigh dead will start into new life, and no statesman will have to regret, for financial reasons, the Turkish Convention of June 1878, whilst strategically it is the best point that could have been acquired for the defence of Turkey in Asia without

actually taking up a position on the main land.

No gloomy views were expressed at the head-quarters camp, and the scare about sickness, of which so much had been made in England, did not seem to exist; true, there had been illness, but the season of 1878 had been an exceptionally unhealthy one all over the Mediterranean; and if I am not mistaken, the percentage of sickness among the troops had been greater at Malta and Gibraltar than at Cyprus.

Next morning we were obliged to say good-bye to our kind host, as we expected the mail from Alexandria to arrive, and by it our absentee from England, and also Schaefer's kit which had been sent round by sea whilst he had come out overland.

The ride back to Larnaca brought nothing of adventure, but on arrival we found our Chaldean on the flat of his back and declaring he was going to die. He had a very slight cold, caused probably by having been rash enough to

wash his face, and like most Orientals he gave in at once to being ill.

The mail steamer came into port the next day but without the third member of the party; so, though it brought Schaefer's luggage, we decided again to wait for another steamer in order to give No. 3 one more chance, and then start for Beirut.

In the evening we were rather amused whilst at our dinner by an ancient individual shaved like one of "The old Guard" who entered into the polyglot conversation of the tratoria, and asserted loudly that the name of Don Pasquale which we had given to our host "*était historique.*" "But," said we, "it's only a nickname, for fun, that we call him Don Pasquale." "*Mais Don. Pasquale c'est historique,*" answered our old Guard. After a time, as he seemed an original, we got into conversation with him, and found out that he was a Swiss called Castan Bey who had at one time been a doctor to the seraglio at Constantinople and had for many years been exiled to Cyprus.

He had also served with the Turkish contingent during the Crimean war, and had received a sabre cut on the head, which in some measure accounted for the numerous eccentricities he indulged in. He told us that he lived at Limasol, and that if we would go there with him he would give up a visit to Beirut whither he was bound. He added as an inducement that he possessed a wonderful collection of antiquities he had himself dug up which were at his house, and which he would show us if we would accompany him. After some consultation, Schaefer and I made up our minds to go with him the next day, starting in the evening, so as to avoid the heat of the sun. Our first business in the morning was to find beasts to carry us, about which there was some little difficulty, no tariff having been established to Limasol and the Muleteers asking exorbitant prices. Whilst bargaining with one, a man who had set up as an auctioneer came and told us that he could let us have horses. After a bit we found out that the

horses he spoke of did not belong to him, but were some that had been collected for a sale, and which the owners naturally did not wish to hire out. The auctioneer, who was the worse for liquor, wanted to persuade us to take them, and said that they were all at his disposal; however, we were able to come to no arrangement about them, and thought we should have to give up all idea of the trip, when we found an Englishman who kept a sort of hotel and who had two horses left behind by one of the Indian Cavalry regiments, which he agreed after a little bargaining to let us have.

Castan Bey told us that by leaving at six o'clock we should arrive at a sort of half-way house about ten or eleven, and by starting early next morning we should reach Limasol before ten.

We got everything ready for the start, Castan appearing mounted on a most diminutive tat which he had bought for a few shillings from one of the Indian camp-followers, and

which was scarcely tall enough to keep his feet off the ground.

Just as we were going to start he discovered that he wanted a pair of "*jambières*," and went off again, but soon reappeared with a long pair of gaiters buttoned up inside his legs, the straps for keeping up which seemed to be very much in his way.

All preliminaries being now arranged, we got under way. While riding through the bazaar he discovered that we should want provisions, and so began bargaining at various little stalls for bread and cheese and coffee which he stuffed into his saddle-bags. This done, he discovered that his horse wanted the spur, and borrowed one of mine. Just as I had my foot cocked up on the saddle to take it off we passed one of the petty officers of the squadron, who knew me, and who, whilst he touched his cap, looked rather amused and perplexed to know where we were bound with our comical friend.

On we went into the shades of evening, and

soon after passing the Roman aqueduct which used to bring water to the town, it fell dark. Castan Bey was full of conversation, mostly about the corrupt state of the Greek Church in the island, the higher classes of which he averred were opposed to the English occupation, some because they were Russophiles, and others because they were afraid that their reign of extortion would be put an end to, and their immorality and ignorance unveiled.

We blundered along in the dark. About ten o'clock we heard the sound of the sea on our left, and thought that Zie, our proposed halting-place for the night, must be close at hand, and so it was; but Castan Bey declared that we must keep to the right. Following his guidance we did so. His conversation became wilder, and as we found no village and he declared himself lost, we began to suspect that we had entrusted ourselves to the guidance of a lunatic. However, about 3 A.M. we found ourselves near a village and

insisted on going to it. Of course everybody was dead asleep when we arrived, but after making a great row at the first house we came to, we succeeded in rousing a man who, though sleepy, seemed good humoured. He could lodge neither us nor our beasts, but took us to a larger house, where the people instantly turned out and did their best to make us welcome.

We got some fodder for the horses and then picketed them in the yard; the whole family, who were sleeping in one large room, turning out for us and making a fire. All they could produce in the way of food was some honey and eggs, but we soon had coffee, and with our bread and cheese made a fair meal. I had a waterproof sheet strapped behind my saddle, and Schaefer was similarly provided; we camped out in the yard, preferring that to the chance of unwelcome bedfellows inside, whilst our guide and would-be host, Castan Bey, turned into the master's bed.

By six o'clock we were on the road again

but the poor horses were very tired. At eight we stopped by a small stream and made a breakfast off the remainder of our bread and cheese, whilst the animals grazed at will. We attempted making coffee in a tin cup. Castan, who said he was a good traveller, capsized it in taking it off the fire, so that we had to be content with water. When we again started Castan declared we were within three hours of Limasol, and that the village Maroni, where we had slept, was scarcely more than that distance from it, and that we should surely arrive before noon.

The country was very broken and with many rocky torrent-beds, but in several places there were groves of olive-trees, and the people were busy collecting their crops They used curious odds and ends for carrying the fruit. Handkerchiefs, gregos, and in some cases even boots, were pressed into the service. Near one of these groves Castan told us he had left a coat with some money and his Crimean medal. He was in a great state of

mind when he couldn't find them, and lost much time in vainly questioning the peasants who were about and threatening them with all the terrors of the law.

About one o'clock he told us Limasol was still a long way off, but that we were near a village, where we could get something to eat, and where there was a very ancient fountain well worth visiting. If he had been left to himself he might have been wandering there now, but luckily we saw cows and other signs of inhabitants near, so we rode straight for them across one or two ravines and grips which the old troopers managed bravely; but Castan could not bring himself to risk a fall and went a long way round by an easier road. The village was soon reached, and the head man took compassion on us and prepared a good repast—eggs, bread, cheese, meat, tomatoes, milk, coffee, and country wine, with grain for the horses. For all this we paid two shillings, not much certainly, but enough to satisfy our host. In the courtyard

were some beautiful almond-trees, and the house was quite clean and tidy, a great contrast to the one where we had halted during the night. The carob harvest was going on as well as the olive gathering, and all the storehouses seemed full to repletion. After our meal, we went to see the fountain where Castan had told me there was an ancient inscription.

It was a lovely little spot, with a broken-down arch and stone trough for animals to drink from, and a spout for the village girls to fill their water-jars; beautiful maidenhair and other ferns were growing in profusion. The inscription proved to be modern, the date being the latter end of last century, and it and the fountain were the last visible remains of an old convent.

When the poor horses were somewhat refreshed we got under way again and proceeded on our journey to Limasol. On the road we passed some old ruins and some huge detached masses of metamorphic rock, which Castan

asserted were the remains of some ancient Cyclopean race, but which I am very much inclined to think were natural.

Limasol was not reached till nearly eight o'clock, and when we did arrive it was to find everything in dire disorder.

Castan Bey's eldest son had taken advantage of his father's absence to start for Constantinople, and had persuaded his step-mother to give him all the money in the house. She, poor woman, was in bed with a toothache, and the only domestic was a half-witted peasant girl. We procured stabling for our horses at a sort of caravanserai close by, and when we came back found the aspect of things rather more cheerful. Castan Bey had been out to forage, and meeting a friendly Greek, vice-consul for some power, had prevailed upon him to provide a supper and a bottle of what was by courtesy called champagne. We discussed it with appetite, and were glad to take up our places on divans in the sitting-room, as there were no bed-rooms to spare. After our

long ride we were in nowise fastidious and soon were sound asleep.

We spent the next morning in examining the collection of antiquities which had been the bait that lured us to Limasol.

Very curious and interesting they were, but no idea of arrangement seemed to have ever entered the head of Castan Bey. Heads, torsos, pitchers, and glass were huddled together in confusion, and not even an attempt had been made at keeping the treasures-trove from different localities separate. He had large quantities of Phœnician glass, now rendered opalescent by the effect of age, and so light and fragile that it felt like so much paper. Much of this glass was found by the Crusaders and Venetians during their occupation of the island, and used by them instead of their clumsy *vaisselle* of horn and metal.

To the long occupation of Cyprus by the Venetians and the quantities of glass found there, may no doubt be attributed the introduction of the manufacture of glass at Venice,

which under free political institutions is again reviving after a slumber of a century and more.

We were sorely tempted to purchase Castan's collection, but had neither the time nor the means at our disposal, and I fear it is doomed to reckless destruction by the hands of his Cypriote wife, and still more blundering servant.

Of his wife, Castan Bey always speaks in terms of apology, and excuses himself for having married her. "But what can one do in Cyprus?" often comes in; the universal ending of these Jeremiads being, "*Si elle n'était pas honnête, je la mettrais hors de la porte.*"

Poor thing, when we saw her in the morning, she evidently stood in fear and trembling of her lord and master, whom she apparently regarded as a superior being, and who certainly treated her as an inferior, scarcely so well as he did the maid.

When we went to look after the horses, we found them so thoroughly tired, that we

thought it best to give them another day. Leaving them to be sent back in charge of a messenger, we arranged to return to Larnaca in a boat, the night wind being reported to be always fair, as indeed it had been ever since our arrival.

In the evening we started, but as next morning we found ourselves only half-way to Zie, and no wind to take us either backwards or forwards, we had to put into a little bay, where we were glad to find a cave which afforded shelter from the burning rays of the mid-day sun. The boatmen brought us a fowl and some eggs from a neighbouring village, with which I made a spatch cock and an omelette. Salt from the rocks and a loaf of bread completed our meal, for which hunger proved an excellent sauce.

In the evening we again made a start, but the winds were scarcely more propitious, and we found ourselves next morning off Zie, where we landed, as it was a dead calm, and there seemed no chance of making any better

progress in the boat than we had already done.

Here we found a sort of inn or *café*, where we got a meal of pickled beccaficoes, eggs and coffee, and after some trouble, mules and a guide were found to take us to Larnaca.

The mules had evidently, both from smell and appearance been employed in bringing in loads of carobs, the harvest being now in full swing, and were very tired and miserable, poor brutes!

However it was a case of Hobson's choice, these or none, so we were fain to make the best of them. After a long and tedious ride, we arrived at Larnaca, the unfortunate mules being almost brought to a dead stop by the trench cut across the road for the telegraph cable which was being hauled ashore when we came in. We bargained with our muleteer, that the poor animals should do no work the next day, and agreed to pay him in the evening in order to make quite sure he did not start off before they were duly rested.

The mail steamer coming in (*sans le troisième*) we embarked for Beirut, where we arrived the next morning. We landed without any trouble, our firman franking us through the Custom House, so that our baggage was not examined.

Once on shore we found comfortable quarters at the Hôtel de l'Orient, kept by Monsieur Baseul, and quite the best at Beirut.

CHAPTER III.

Miracles of perfection—Mr. George Sabia—Frock coat and paper collars—A Russian baron—Political discourses—*Le grand ministre*—Treaty of San Stefano—June convention—Italian Consul-General—American college—Research collections—Horses—Muleteers—Assyrian and Egyptain sculptures—Their deterioration—Beirut waterworks—Levantines—Varnish of European manners—Rustem Pasha—Russian invasion—State of the Lebanon—A mock Druse—His terror—A Druse and a Frenchman—Cutting off a beard—The Maronites—The monasteries—Missionaries—Naval demonstration—Usurers—Consuls-General.

ARRIVED at Beirut, our first care was to procure animals for our transport and riding, and many (miracles of perfection, if all their owners said was to be believed) were brought for our inspection. One fellow, who said he had to go off immediately to Egypt, came with an ancient broken-kneed and broken-down screw, which he was willing to sell cheap at 70*l.*, as

some milords were waiting at Cairo to go up the Nile with him. At the risk of delaying these milords he haunted the neighbourhood of the hotel until we left, in the vain hope of foisting his steed on us.

Our Chaldean had some friends among the missionaries, and one, Mr. George Sabia, a teacher in the British schools, was very useful to us, busying himself in finding us servants and arranging various small matters, whilst the Chaldean stalked about in all the grandeur of a frock coat, sun helmet, paper cuffs and collars, giving himself airs, and being utterly useless. If he had not been recommended as a good linguist, and that we hoped he might, when out of towns, lose some of his vanity, I think we should have sent him about his business on the spot. As it was, we found other friends who helped us in our preparations, notably a Russian baron who was stopping at the same hotel, and who placed his dragoman at our disposal. He also most kindly gave up to me a horse he had hired for his own use.

The baron, who for some reason did not live in Russia, had for several years made the East his head-quarters, and during the Russo-Turkish war had been to the Ionian Islands, whence he had lately returned. He used to speak his opinions freely. "*Parlez franchement*," he used always to say, "if the politics of our two countries are not at present in accord, there is no reason why individuals should be unfriendly. *L'Angleterre possède la force morale, et nous autres, nous avons la force brutale.*" On this text he used to speak for hours, arguing that an alliance between the two countries would be of great value to both, and that we should frankly admit that the old times were passing away, and that in the new that were coming, England and Russia, both by their geographical positions and by the condition of their frontiers, should lead the van in the civilisation of the world. Like most independent Russians he seemed to dislike the Germans very much, and would say, placing his hand on Asia: "There is the most populous

portion of the globe, we are the masters there; why should the policy of the world be directed by two comparatively small countries like Germany and France, who have no interests worth mentioning beyond their own immediate borders? Why, if we were to join our forces, we could dictate the policy of the world." He also quoted against us the annexation of the Transvaal, the Afghan war, and the troubles with the Kafirs, in order to show how impossible it is for a civilised country to prevent extending her dominions when they are coterminous with territories occupied by unruly and savage tribes.

There was a great deal of shrewd sense and truth in what he said, but I am afraid that there was also a great deal that would be impracticable in the present state of the world; and before other things of which he spoke can be accomplished, there must be a great change in the opinions of leading politicians.

Certainly two things which he said were very true, that it would be much better for each

country to believe that the other was acting honestly and for the best, instead of trying to ascribe everything to bad motives, and that the English opposition were as much to blame for the Turkish war as the Russians. He asserted, and I believe with much truth, that the Russian armies would never have crossed the Pruth if it had not been for the agitation got up by the atrocity-mongers in England, and that the cause of the failure of the Constantinople Convention was to be ascribed to the same reason.

The Berlin Conference, however, he looked upon as a great triumph for English diplomacy, and, like many other people who I met, called Lord Beaconsfield "*le grand ministre*," looking upon him as a greater and more able statesman than either Gortschakoff or Bismarck.

Russia, he thought, had gone to Berlin with the idea that the treaty of San Stefano would be virtually confirmed in its entirety, and that all the changes that would be made would be

merely verbal, not affecting its execution or spirit. The great alterations effected by Great Britain, and the support she received from the other powers, who all looked up to her as the leader, very much astonished the Russian Government; and the announcement of the June Convention coming at the same time, proved to them that they had reached the limit of what they would be permitted to do.

We met with much kindness from many of the residents, amongst others from the Italian Consul-General and the members of the American College, which is doing a great educational work, and is of immense use to the country. In addition to teaching, the professors employ themselves in research, and their botanical, geological, and other collections—especially one of the fishes of the limestone strata of the Lebanon—are very complete and interesting.

Schaefer found a very good horse for which he paid 13*l.*, and as I only paid 10*l.* for mine, we were fairly lucky in our purchases. Mine I called the Count, and Schaefer named his Masood (or

"the happy one"). For our baggage, servants, and the Chaldean, we hired mules, which were the property of men belonging to a Christian village called Zahlich, near Baalbek, for which we had to pay at the rate of fifteen piastres a day each mule. For this price, which was, as we found afterwards, too high—the muleteers had to feed their mules, load and unload them, and pitch the tents. We also engaged a groom for our horses, and a cook and two servants, so that altogether we made a large party.

With Mr. Cornish, engineer of the water-works, we rode out to see the old Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures near the mouth of the Dog river, and saw all the works for the supply of water to Beirut. The sculptures are carved on the native rock, and now, I am sorry to say, after having weathered so many centuries, are beginning to be obliterated by water soaking through the rock and forming a sort of deposit on their face. This deposit, after a time, scales off, and with it part of the stone crumbles away. It may seem Vandalism to recommend

their being cut out of the rocks where they have existed for thousands of years, but unless this is done, in another twenty or thirty years there will be only blurred and scarcely distinguishable marks. Much of the cuneiform writing which surrounds the figures in the Assyrian bas-reliefs is already rendered illegible from this cause. No shelter that could be contrived would stop the process of deterioration. If it is thought best that they should remain where they are, they should be carefully taken from the rocks and a small house built to place them in. I think, however, that they would be more readily accessible, and better cared for, if they were presented to the American College, which certainly, as the foremost educational establishment in Beirut, has most claim to be their resting-place.

From these monuments of antiquity to the waterworks was a step of over three thousand years, but the mills of the Maronite convents on the banks of the river might have been copied from the Ninevite sculptures.

The water for the town is taken from the river above a solid weir, and then by a leet, or small canal, for some distance to the pumping station; the pumps are worked by a turbine driven by the fall of a portion of the water, and five or six hours a day suffice to pump the whole supply for the town. The water is conveyed in iron pipes into the town from the station, a distance of nine miles. Many people who begged and prayed for the water before it was at their doors, and promised to pay for having it laid on to their houses, now that it is there are too apathetic to avail themselves of it, and these are not only among the poor.

One of the best things that could happen for the prospects of the water company would be a really serious epidemic of cholera, or some other sweeping illness, at Beirut. That it has not come is a wonder, for all sanitary and other regulations are neglected, notwithstanding the presence of many Europeans. The Levantines, who form the bulk, however, of the so-called European population, think

they have done enough for civilisation when they appear dressed to within an inch of their lives on the pattern of the Parisian *Gommeux*, with their wives attired in the latest French fashion lounging beside them in flashy carriages, harness and carriage alike overloaded with tawdry plating and dust and dirt.

Some of these Levantines are certainly both desirous and capable of a better state of things, but they are a mere sprinkling. The merest varnish of European manners is assumed by people who are still Orientals in their ideas, and the effect is very often ludicrous.

Before leaving Beirut we called upon his Excellency Rustem Pasha, Governor-General of the Lebanon, who was most kind and courteous. In the room where he received us were two enormous stuffed bears which he had killed, when he was Turkish ambassador at St. Petersburg, after a desperate struggle. He seemed to put great faith in the recuperative powers of the Turkish empire, and said, with some bitterness, that if it had not been for the mistakes—

"terrible mistakes"—which had been committed, he believed the Ottoman empire, alone and unaided, would have been strong enough to roll back the tide of Russian invasion. The condition of the Lebanon since the laws of 1860 had been enforced, he said, was most flourishing, every inch of ground that could be utilised on the mountain sides by means of terraces being cultivated, the only drawback being the jealousy between the Druses and Maronites,—which will always continue as long as they dwell together, and for which the former are not always to blame—and the very low rate of taxation, which did not allow enough funds to be collected for roads and other public works.

The Druses are regarded by many of the Christians with a sort of superstitious awe, and I was told one story, in all good faith, which was supposed to prove them to be blood-thirsty robbers. One of the Christian peasantry of the mountains was in the habit of trading in the Druse villages, and found it much better for

his purpose to adopt the Druse dress, though without any idea of denying his Christianity. One day he found himself among Druses where he was not known, and was invited to sleep in the house of an old man who was one of their priests. This old man seeing him lie down to sleep without saying his prayers, told him that it was very wrong, and asked why he did so. The Christian answered that he knew it was wrong, but that it was scarcely his fault, as he had been badly brought up, and did not know how to pray properly. On this the old man volunteered to teach him, and commenced by a series of imprecations against all who were not Druses, and vows to kill men, women, and children who were Jews, Christians, or Mohammedans. His frightened guest repeated all this after him, but took the opportunity of his host falling asleep to levant. Once in a Christian village he changed his clothes, and registered a solemn vow never again to appear disguised as a Druse.

This story was told originally to a missionary

by one of his converts, and very probably was intended to enlist his sympathies on the side of the Maronites. According to many people the Druses compare very favourably with their neighbours, though they are more quarrelsome and warlike. In truth-telling both races are on a par; a Druse, indeed, will swear by his beard (the most sacred oath that he can use) to a falsehood. One did so to a well-known Frenchman, who told the Druse that if what he said proved untrue, and he got him into his hands, he would cut his beard off. "On my head be it," said the Druse, and went away. Soon after the Frenchman found out that he had been deceived, and vowed vengeance; nor had he long to wait. The Druse soon came to his house, which was out in the Lebanon, and on being taxed with his false oath acknowledged it with a laugh, saying, "I saw I couldn't deceive you unless I swore by my beard, and therefore 'I swore by my beard,' and would do so again if it were necessary." The Frenchman, who was a big,

powerful man, waxed irate, and catching hold of the Druse, forced him into a chair and cut his beard off, telling him that he shouldn't have a beard to swear by for some time.

The trouble that was caused by this was immense; not only the man himself, but all his relations, took up the quarrel, and were furious. "What, cut off a man's beard! better have killed him; a man more or less does not matter much, but to render us all ridiculous is not to be borne." After a great deal of disputing, and many threats, the matter was at length taken before the French Consul-General, and a peace patched up on the condition of the Frenchman paying a hundred pounds to the man who had been thus unceremoniously docked. Many *habitués* of Beirut, however, said that some day or other the rash Frenchman would most probably pay with his life for having insulted a fiery Druse in his most tender point of honour.

The Maronites when aroused are not so fierce as the Druses, but they have so often found being persecuted a profitable speculation, that

they are fond of provoking their neighbours. Sometimes they succeed only too well, and then are loud in their outcries. A large and ignorant body of monks is also a blot upon the prosperity of the Lebanon, and as they own the most fertile portions of the province, pay no taxes, and get their lands cultivated for them by their peasantry, they are not likely to become fewer in number. Under the present arrangements about Mount Lebanon and its inhabitants, the Turk will never be able to do anything to the monasteries, but a law of mortmain is urgently needed, else one day the whole of the range will pass into their hands, and the peasantry be even more completely subject to them than they are at present.

The Jesuits and American missionaries are both striving to bring the Maronites into what each party considers the pale of true Christianity, and in this competition lies a hope for the future, otherwise the outlook would be gloomy indeed.

After the massacres of 1860 and the French

occupation, aided by the naval demonstration of all the powers interested in the question, much was done for the Christians, but the money indemnity which the Turkish Government had to pay to the sufferers did them, in reality, far more harm than good. The people who were to receive the money got advances on account of it from the usurers of Beirut, and once in their hands, they have never been able to free themselves from the toils, so that a very large proportion of the property of the lay inhabitants of the Lebanon is now subject to the claims of these harpies. All the powers who interested themselves in the settlement of the troubles of 1860 have through their Consuls-General at Beirut the right of seeing that the agreements then made are faithfully carried out, and it would not be too much to ask that they should inquire what measures would be advantageous both for the inhabitants and the Government, and to urge their adoption by the rulers of the province.

CHAPTER IV.

A baron and a correspondent—The French road—Their painful way—Non-progressive nature—Summer retreats —Such cavalry!—Infantry—Ignorance of officers—Mountains of Cyprus—Chill air—Kopf's Erbwurst—Cœle-Syria—A curious mixture—Passengers by diligence —A narrow escape—Fools and fire-arms—Inn at Shtaura —Mr. Rattray—A plucky Englishwoman—A modern Turkish road — Extortion — Mualakka — Zahlich — Mr. Dale—Jesuits — Muleteers — Rope-makers — Poplars— Baalbek — Burton — Baksheesh — A locanda — French officers—Quarries—Parks and pleasure-grounds—Decadence—Prisoners of war—Steam-engines—Official visits —Telegraphs—Hôtel de Palmyre—A row—A reported murder—A wounded man—The serai—Cigarettes and apologies—Kurdish zaptieh.

HAVING engaged our muleteers and servants, we made our start from Beirut on Monday, 28th of October, leaving the courtyard of the Hôtel d'Orient at eleven o'clock in the morning. The Baron and Mr. Macdonald, correspondent of the *Standard*, came out in a carriage to a

café in the pine wood, a favourite resort of the inhabitants of Beirut, to see the last of us.

The French road to Damascus by which we travelled is a wonderfully good piece of engineering, the gradients by which the mountain is passed being remarkably easy when the height ascended for the distance is considered. The tolls which are exacted, however, prevent the peasantry making use of the road, and long strings of camels, mules, and donkeys, are to be seen wending their painful way along rough and broken ground at its side.

The non-progressive nature of the people is well shown by their adhering to the old means of transport by pack animals instead of taking to wheeled carriages. The only wheeled vehicles to be seen on the road are the diligence which runs daily to Damascus and mule waggons belonging to the Company.

As we ascended, the views were lovely; here and there were perched little villas, embowered in trees and flowers, the summer retreats of consuls and merchants; and nestling in the

valleys many a village which viewed at a distance looked smiling and peaceful.

On our way we met a detachment of cavalry on its road down to Beirut. Such cavalry! uniforms varied and patched, men slouching about, and no order kept on the march; but the Turk never has been, and, unless very differently commanded, never will be a good cavalry soldier. All their conquests were made and their authority established by their unrivalled infantry; and even in the present day they possess as good material for infantry soldiers as any nation in the world. Except indeed for the ignorance of the officers, many of their regiments would compare favourably with those of the western powers.

Just at sunset we lost sight of the sea, and, whether it were fancy or not, we thought we could trace the mountains of Cyprus on the western horizon, our last view of British territory. At the elevation we were above the sea the night air struck chill after Beirut, where the thermometer was over 80° in

the shade, and we were by no means sorry when our halting-place at Sofaa was reached, and our tent pitched.

With all our people new to the work things did not go very smoothly the first night, and the cook did not seem to have his wits about him more than sufficiently to boil water to make tea. Luckily I remembered the exact locality in the packages of some Kopf's Erbwurst, and in a few minutes we had some capital soup, which with cold meat we had brought with us furnished us with a very good dinner.

Next morning we were awake betimes, and soon on the move. Our camping place had been nearly at the highest point of the road, and we soon began to descend towards the fertile plain of the Boka'a, a level strip of alluvial land lying between the ranges of the Lebanon and the Anti Lebanon and known to the ancients as Cœle-Syria.

At about nine o'clock, when we were half-way down the mountain side, we met the

French diligence at a change house, a curious mixture of last century France and modern Turkey. A team composed of mules and horses, driven by a Frenchman in a great-coat with numerous capes, but with his head covered with an Arab *Kofia*. The passengers were staid turbaned Turks, or Arabs wrapped in their burnouses so that not a feature was visible except the piercing black eye. Here we got some coffee and oranges, and watered our horses, as it had been too cold to do so before starting. Soon afterwards we distinguished in the plain a grove of poplar trees which surrounded Shtaura where the half-way house between Beirut and Damascus is kept by a Frenchman and his wife.

We decided to let our mules go on to Zahlich, where we were to camp and to refresh our horses and ourselves at the Frenchman's hostelry. Having given the necessary orders we turned off the road to take a short cut, Schaefer and myself in front and our dragoman just behind us. Suddenly Schaefer and

I were astonished by a bullet whizzing close by our heads and the report of a pistol, and as we were turning round to see what had happened, another struck the ground close to us. Our dragoman was the culprit. He was brandishing his pistol in great glee, and exclaiming, "I did never fire a revolver before, and it did not shake my arm one bit." We had to give him a little lecture on the subject of fools and firearms, and told him that if he attempted to fire off his revolver again before he had been taught how to use it, it would be taken away from him, and that he was never to load it without permission.

At the inn, we got a capital luncheon and barley for our horses, and were glad to be able to add a good notice to the many already written in the visitors' book. Here we met Mr. Rattray, an Englishman, who is cultivating some of the ground in the neighbourhood, which, according to him, is wondrously fertile. His wife lives with him without any other Europeans in the house,

and when he is absent, as he often is, she has to trust to her own courage and wit for defence.

Once some Zaptieh were sent to make a levy on their property, on account of some disputed taxes, which Mr. Rattray had refused to pay until the matter had been referred to the English consul. He was absent, but his wife, nothing daunted, barricaded the doors and windows, loaded her firearms, and told them if they attempted to break in, she would fire. The Zaptieh thought discretion the better part of valour, and withdrew, saying that the English were all possessed, and their women worse than the men of other nations.

From Shtaura our route led along the valley by a road which had been commenced in imitation of the French road to Damascus, but never completed. A little show is being kept up of working at the necessary bridges, but in many places it has been ruined before it is finished. Scarcely any attempt has been made to metal it properly, and it is so rough

in consequence, that all the traffic passes on either side.

If the inhabitants are to be believed, for this road—which is supposed to reach Baalbek, a distance of twenty-four miles,—sixty thousand pounds Turk, or about fifty-three thousand sterling, have been extorted from the inhabitants. What has been done, has been accomplished by forced labour or corvée, the statutable amount of which is four days in the year. The completion of the road was now delayed purposely in order to extract more money from the inhabitants; nearly the whole of this extortion having fallen upon the Mohammedans, as most of the Christians have emigrated into the Lebanon.

Passing through Mualakka, a large Mohammedan village, we arrived at Zahlich and found our tent all ready for us. Soon after we arrived Mr. Dale, the American missionary here, came and called on us. Like the rest of his confrères he seemed a gentleman-like, well-informed, and pleasant man, his

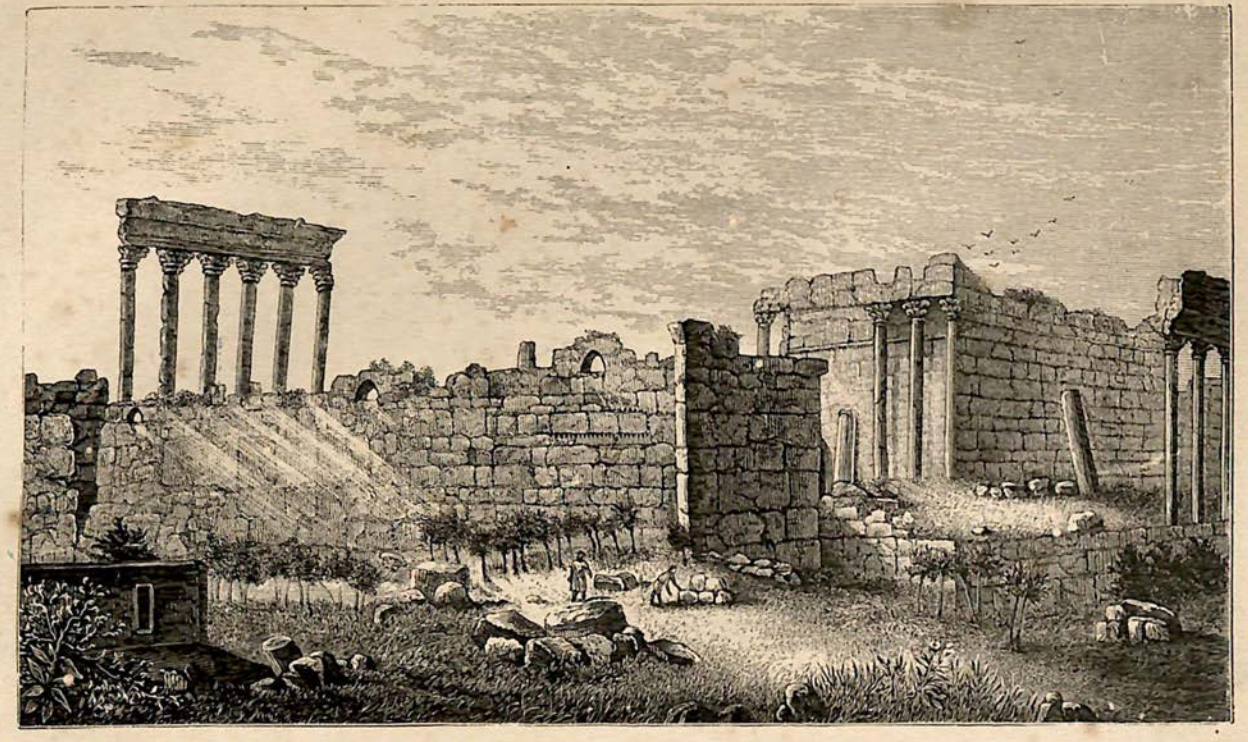
greatest grievance, being the progress which, in common with the other Roman Catholic Missionaries elsewhere, the Jesuits are making here. Zahlich is a prosperous enough place, surrounded with vineyards; and streams of good water flow through the town. A great number of the inhabitants are muleteers, and bear a very good character. All ours hailed from here, and of course were delighted to have a chance of seeing their families. Another trade which seemed to be flourishing was rope-making, much rope, I suppose, being required by the muleteers for lashing the loads on their animals. Like most other towns and villages where water is plentiful, Zahlich possessed large groves of poplar trees, which are used for rafters in building the flat-topped houses. As they grow straight and very quickly they are so far well fitted for the purpose, but the wood is soft and decays easily when exposed to the weather.

Our next march brought us to the far-famed ruins of Baalbek, certainly some of the most

remarkable remains of antiquity still existing. When one gazes on the vast stones and columns and the magnificent proportions of the temples, one is tempted indeed to say, "There were giants in those days." Of the wonderful ruins and places that I have seen Baalbek alone surpassed my expectations. Burton and Warren have described these marvellous remains far better than I possibly could do. The history of ages is written in their silent masses, and they grow on one's spirit and impress one more and more the longer one gazes.

We had seen the line of columns towering in the distance long before we arrived, and were gradually getting into a proper excitement about them, when, on reaching the town, our reveries were rudely dispelled by a mob of urchins clamouring for Baksheesh, most detestable of eastern cries, and offering to show us the way to the locanda or hotel.

Shades of the departed! dwell in an hotel at Baalbek! perish the thought! We



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pitched our tent in the midst of the ruins, near those of a party of French officers making a tour through Syria and Palestine.

Burton has done something towards awakening the interest of the world to the necessity of looking after the preservation of Baalbek, but more is needed; during the last half century several of the principal rows of columns have disappeared and the ruins are looked upon by the inhabitants of the town as a quarry from which to take stone to build their houses and fence their fields. After Burton's visit iron cramps were put in in some places, to keep the stones from falling, but many of these have been removed by the people for the sake of the metal, and some of the enormous stones which form one of the principal features of the place, have been drilled and blasted to pieces by these vandals, who are too lazy to go to the quarries a little further off to get the stone for their daily needs. Built into their hovels, these stones are lost, the people apparently

enjoying the breaking up of carved capitals and sculptured slabs, and preferring it to taking stones from ruined houses of modern date which are closer to hand and already of the size required by these degenerate descendants of the mighty men of old.

A magnificent mosque was built in the early days of Mohammedan supremacy out of materials obtained from the ancient temples, but this is now completely in ruins, and the mosque used at present is as mean and dirty a specimen as could well be imagined.

Though the plains round Baalbek are now bare, except in the immediate vicinity of the town, it is easy to imagine what a delightful place it must have been when the country round it was clothed with woods interspersed with parks and pleasure-grounds. That it was of great importance for many ages is proved by the various styles of architecture visible in the remains, commencing with the Cyclopean stones. One over eighty feet in length lies almost ready for moving in the quarry, and

another sixty-four feet long forms part of the third course of masonry in the southern wall; then the best forms of Greek and Roman art, followed by that of the decadence, and finally the work of the Saracen conquerors, bringing us down to the comparatively modern days of the Crusades. A history of thousands of years is told by those stones to those who have eyes to read it. One can imagine the spirits of the builders of these enduring monuments still hovering around and taking pride in the admiration of travellers of the nineteenth century; but with these thoughts another mingles, the thought of the armies of slaves and prisoners of war who must have toiled and panted under the taskmaster's lash ere those huge stones and mighty columns were raised into their places.

The present inhabitants say that the steam-engine and all modern scientific engineering appliances were used in their erection; the poorer classes, indeed, have an idea, which was retailed to us as a compliment, that the English,

whom they regard as the first of mechanics, lived here in some forgotten time, and that the ruins are the signs of their dominion.

At nine o'clock on the morning after our arrival, messengers came down to our tent, saying the kadi and mejliss (town council) were going to make a call on us, and almost immediately afterwards they arrived in all the dignity of turbans and furred gowns, anxious to know if railways were immediately to run past their doors to bring them the manufactures of the west and afford a ready outlet for their own products. Our dragoman, who had claimed an intimate knowledge with Turkish amongst other tongues, was soon stranded; in fact he could do no more than tell us that the people had come to call. Luckily, a doctor and telegraph clerk, who were in the train of the great people, could talk French, so that we were able to dispense with his services. The amount which these good people averred was produced yearly in the district of which Baalbek is the centre, seemed marvellous. Even after allowing

for exaggeration, and getting to more authentic figures, the results were astonishing, and amply proved how promising are the commercial prospects of the place.

Much of the trade at present is with other parts of the Turkish empire; but although only about fourteen hours' hard travelling from the coast, Baalbek in ideas and customs is left behind in the Middle Ages. The telegraph which comes here is almost entirely used for official purposes, for which, in the eyes of the Turks, it is admirably adapted, as, in the first place, it does away with the bother of letter-writing, and in the second it is such an admirable instrument for blinding those dogs of Giaours. This is the usual way in which the dogs are rendered blind:—Some abuse is reported which demands instant redress. A despatch is dictated to the central authorities by a European consul or minister and sent off at once by special messenger to the official implicated, and the ire of the European is appeased. As soon as the Turk is left alone,

he offers thanks to Heaven for having enabled him to get rid of the infidel, and telegraphs additional instructions entirely altering the meaning of the despatch. If any complaint is made the central authority appeals to the terms of the despatch, and bewails that it should have been misunderstood. Thus, although the telegraph post and wires are to be seen everywhere in the Turkish dominions, they are by no means a sign of an advance in civilisation; they may have a tongue, but they have neither eyes nor ears.

When the notables left, a very respectable-looking and well-dressed man, in European clothes, and wearing the fez, put in an appearance. He spoke French, and after some conversation, in which he appeared both intelligent and well-informed, we found out that he was the proprietor of the Hôtel de Palmyre, which he had just established for the convenience of tourists to Baalbek. He had come to solicit our patronage, or rather to beg us to visit it, and give him our opinion on what he had done.

Whilst we were talking, some soldiers came to say that the kaimakan was about to pay us a visit, so we put all things in order to receive him, when one of our muleteers came rushing in, saying that there was a row between them and some zaptieh, and they were being taken to the serai unwarrantably. Thinking that very probably he was exaggerating, I sent our dragoman up with the soldiers who had come to announce the visit of the Kaimakan, to see what was the matter, and ordered our horses to be saddled to go up a little later ourselves, so as to avoid the appearance of haste and flurry.

The Chaldean seemed very much afraid to trust himself in the town, and it was only by decided orders that he was forced to go. Soon after he had started, another of our people came rushing in with a rabble rout of Christians, declaring that one of our men was murdered and that the Mohammedans were going to massacre all the Christians. As they all looked dishevelled and as if they had been in a free

fight, we thought it best to go up at once, and the horses being ready, jumped on. Luckily I thought of taking my pocket-case of instruments as in the row, if there had been one, knives or swords might have been used. All the people followed shouting and crying out, and as we went along, everybody seemed to think that the presence of an Englishman had some sort of magic effect to protect them. Just before we got to the serai, I saw one of our muleteers lying in the road, covered with blood and almost senseless; as I heard that the Government doctor was at the serai, I ordered him to be taken in there to have his wounds dressed. When we arrived at the serai, council and kaimacan were all assembled and the guard under arms, and we were received with a general salute. Everybody proffered his services, the zaptieh who had committed the outrage had already been arrested and a trial was to commence at once.

We saw the wounded man consigned to the hands of the doctor, and the cadi and the rest of

the mejliss arranging themselves to examine the witnesses, after which we went with the kaimacan into his own room for the coffee and cigarettes without which nothing can be done in Turkey. He tendered profuse apologies for the affair and for his not having been already to call on us. The zaptieh who had wounded our man, and two others who aided and abetted him, were, he said, the curse of the place; they were Kurds, and under the protection of some one in authority at Damascus, who had sent them to Baalbek, and refused to remove them, notwithstanding many requests. Feeling themselves therefore secure against punishment, they robbed and hectored about the place to the terror of all peaceful inhabitants, Mohammedan and Christian alike.

CHAPTER V.

A curious scene—An awful gash—Cadi and council—A peculiar trial—The doctor's knowledge—Worthy Christians—Old scores—A false report—A party of visitors—Baedekers and Murrays—Wonderful organisation—The kiamacan—Blessings and imprecations—Miss Williams—Wordy warfare—An Inoffensive old gentleman—Misdeeds of the zaptieh—Hôtel de Palmyre—An unknown tongue—The sentence—How it was carried out—The doctor again—Leave Baalbek—Lebweh—Black tents—Canals—Circassians—A shrewd charlatan—K'sehr—A tax-gatherer—The Aneizeh—The Chaldean's courage—Arrive at Homs.

AFTER this explanation we went with the kaimacan into the room where the trial was going on, and a curious sight and scene it was. On one side the wounded man had had the blood washed away from his wounds by the doctor, and was ready for them to be sewed up, but the doctor had not the wherewithal. It had been a happy thought on my part to bring my instruments, as he knew well enough

how to use them, and with a little of my aid the man was successfully patched up. He had an awful gash from the sword of the zaptieh, a scalp wound four or five inches long, and as he fell the point of the sword had cut his forehead open, had split both eyelids, destroying the eye, and had finished its course by gashing the cheek and both lips.

The cadi and council were seated round a table. The kaimacan and we were accommodated with places on a divan, the prisoners were brought in under strong guard, the wounded man and the doctor being at the other end of our divan, and the whole place being crowded with witnesses and spectators.

A more peculiar trial was never seen; every one gesticulating, shouting, and yelling. The prisoners abused kaimacan, cadi, court, and everything else, and were abused in turn. The noise went on increasing till it seemed as if the roof was about to fly off. Suddenly there would come a lull and every one, prisoners, guards, and all, would commence smoking cigarettes. The ringleader in the riot coolly

took a light from one of the members of the court. After a pause, and with their lungs refreshed by the soothing fumes of tobacco, they would all again burst forth in chorus and the noise would be worse than before.

I know not how the clerk to the court managed to make the *procès verbal*, but perhaps he was accustomed to such scenes, and managed to take down a fair description of what had occurred. Though there were fresh gouts of blood on their clothes and hands, and some long hairs were sticking to the sword of the one who had actually struck the blow, the prisoners swore they were innocent. They swore that the blood was that of a sheep. I proposed to have the pieces cut out of their clothes and submitted to Frankish doctors to see what blood it was. The doctor thought this a fine chance to show off his knowledge and struck in to say that there was no need to do that as he could tell at once. Immediately he pronounced the marks to be caused by human blood after the merest superficial inspection. Luckily our case did not rest on such frail testimony, as

an officer had been present and seen the man cut down. So far everything went to convict the culprits, but the question of provocation given and received had to be debated before the punishment could be awarded.

As we left the serai many of the Christian inhabitants crowded round us, and prayed us not to go away till the sentence had been pronounced, and the men sent away to Damascus. Otherwise, they said, no penalty would be inflicted, the Kurds would be released, and as soon as we were gone there would be a general attack on the Christians. These worthy Christians seemed to be very glad that the thing had occurred, as they fancied that the authorities would get into trouble about it, when they would have an opportunity of paying off old scores; our dragoman allied himself with some of these people and, much to my disgust, I afterwards found that he joined them in concocting a report for the Beirut papers in which the whole matter was greatly exaggerated and the authorities accused of being

uncivil, whilst nothing could really have exceeded their civility. Indeed they went out of their way to do many things for us, nor would the kaimacan permit us to return to our tent until he had sent a guard of regular soldiers down to prevent any possible annoyance from the friends of the prisoners. As soon as I heard of it, I contradicted this false report.

As we came into the ruins we saw two English-looking men riding in advance. When we arrived at our own abode, we saw no signs of either their tent or baggage, so we thought it would be only civil to send them our cards and offer the shelter of our tent, and the refreshment of a cup of tea, until their own belongings should arrive. Our servant soon returned with the card of Mr. Rolla Floyd, personal conductor of Messrs. Cook and Sons' tours in Syria and Palestine, with thanks for our offer, and a notification pencilled on the back that the party would call on us. By this time the main body of the tourists, twelve or fourteen in number, had arrived, and we were

rather at a loss to know what to do if they should all accept our invitation, tent and tea-pot both being limited in capacity. Soon we saw the party approaching, and after Mr. Floyd had introduced himself he proceeded to introduce the others in due form. When the ceremony had been gone through, and before there was time for any conversation, he reminded them that there was much to be seen, that the sun would soon set, and that they had to "view" the ruins; like a flock of sheep, they followed him obediently, and we were left alone.

Next morning an extempore bell, made of an iron pot, roused these modern pilgrims at half-past five; at six another tintinnabulation announced that their breakfast was ready, and half-an-hour afterwards their tents were down, their baggage loaded on the mules, and they were away. The conductor then took them to a part they had not visited the previous night. About eight o'clock he rode after the baggage, leaving his flock to spend two hours by them-

selves in studying the ruins by the light of guide-books, measuring stones, etc., etc., and satisfying themselves that their Baedekers and Murrays were correct.

At ten o'clock a guide who had been left to show them the way summoned them to mount their horses, and in five minutes more they were on the road. To people who enjoy racing through countries, and who may have no other means of seeing places famous in the world's history, Messrs. Cook and Sons are great benefactors, though I confess I should be apt to jumble the pyramids, St. Peter's, Baalbek, Jerusalem, and a multitude of other places seen in the course of a comparatively few days, into one vast phantasmagoria, like the dreams caused by nightmare. Certainly all trouble and responsibility are taken from the tourist. Literally he need have no care for the morrow as everything is provided for him. The organisation is wonderful, saddles, bridles, horses, mules, campstools, and everything else, being numbered; I almost expected to see a

label on the backs of *Messieurs les Voyageurs* themselves.

Just after the tourists had departed the kaimacan came to see us, and we found him, like all Turks, civil, and a good companion; he was a stout, greyhaired elderly gentleman, with a laugh that shook him all over when he indulged in it, which was not seldom. He told us how sorry he was about the attack on our muleteer, and, as we already knew, that he had ordered him to be lodged in the house of a respectable Christian, and had told the doctor to attend to him. When he left, the doctor appeared to ask for medicines and bandages. Had we complied with all his requests, he would speedily have relieved us of our stock. Then the host of the wounded man appeared and asked to be paid for his trouble, so that money had to be given, though our portly friend the kaimacan had told us that the Government would pay all expenses. Next appeared the father and mother, who had been fetched from Zahlich, and who kissed our hands and feet

—why in the world I don't know—poured down blessings on our heads, and wound up with a torrent of imprecations on the Kurdish zaptieh. We promised that as far as in us lay we would see justice done, and the offenders punished and imprisoned, which brought on a fresh torrent of blessings and kisses. The old man then went to look after his son's mules, and altogether took his place in our party in his stead.

We had heard of an English school here, and that the native teacher had seen something of the trouble between our people and the zaptieh, so we decided to call and find out what we could. The school was a branch of Mrs. Mott's large British Syrian schools which are an institution at Beirut. This one was presided over by Miss Williams, a warm-hearted old lady, who had done Missionary work in Burmah, India, and other parts of the world. We found that the native teacher did not belong to her establishment, but was a catechist from the American Mission at Zahlich. He

proved to be an old friend of our dragoman, and had a very pretty wife who, our Chaldean Adonis declared, was, or had been, in love with him; of this we saw no signs. When examined about the fight, the catechist seemed only to have got his information at second hand, or perhaps he did not wish to appear as a witness in a case against a Mohammedan. The trouble, as far as we could make out, arose about the buying of some oil by a Christian child; the shopkeeper, in the opinion of our muleteer, cheated him, and then Turk and Christian abused each other and each other's religions, fathers, mothers, and all that by any stretch of imagination could be conceived as belonging to their antagonist. As this wordy warfare was progressing the Kurdish zaptieh appeared on the scene and seized our man for attacking a true believer. Trusting in the ægis of the British flag, the man refused to go as a prisoner to the serai, and demanded to be taken to our camp. At this the ringleader of the Kurds drew his sword and threatened to

cut him down; an officer, who just then appeared on the scene, ordered him to put his sword up again, instead of obeying he made a cut at our man, inflicting the wound already described. When the fact of his having been the actual perpetrator, which he at first stoutly denied, had been fully proved, he asserted that the officer's orders were to cut the man down and not to sheathe his weapon. The officer, an inoffensive old gentleman, was for some time under arrest on account of this, and was not released until we had been consulted.

We next paid a visit to the kaimacan, whom we found sitting under the shade of his own vine in a garden near his house, and with whom we had a good deal of conversation through the medium of the telegraph clerk. The misdeeds of the trio of Kurdish zaptieh were a fruitful source of complaint, one story being that the telegraph clerk, having occasion for a messenger to carry a government despatch, sent for one of these men, whose duty it was to take it; and that the man, objecting

to be disturbed, not only refused to go but more than once threatened his life.

In the evening we dined at the Hôtel de Palmyre, where we were much surprised by the comfort of the place and the good cookery. A capital view of the ancient temples is obtained from a marble paved gallery on the first floor.

Next day being Sunday, I accepted Miss Williams' invitation to attend service at her school, but was disappointed to find that it was an U.P. service in Arabic, conducted by the catechist whom we had seen the day before, the sermon in an unknown tongue being *rather* an infliction. In the evening I went to tea with her, though Schaefer was not included in the invitation, owing, as I found out, to his being a Roman Catholic, a fact of which the Chaldean had duly informed her.

The two following days I was laid up with a touch of African fever. The trial of the prisoners was at last concluded and they were condemned to varying terms of imprisonment,

the most guilty being sentenced to two years. They were sent away under charge of an escort which had come for the purpose from Damascus, where they were to undergo their punishment.

Apropos of this I may mention how the punishment was carried out. I afterwards met at Aleppo Mr. Malet, secretary of embassy at Constantinople, who visited Baalbek after we had left. He found there a new kaimacan, who complained that these men had been released and were going about the town keeping everybody in fear and trepidation. As the men had been condemned in the time of his predecessor he had no power to arrest them and send them back to Damascus. Mr. Malet afterwards went to Damascus and found that the chief of the prison there was also a Kurd and an ally of these blackguards, and that news having arrived that our friendly kaimacan had proceeded to Homs on promotion a few days after they had been entrusted to his charge, he liberated his friends.

Mr. Malet got His Excellency Midhat Pasha, who was then wali of Damascus, to cause them to be re-arrested and again imprisoned, but as their friend continued in his post no doubt the men were again released when the pressure was removed.

A copy of the judgment was given to us which we sent to the consular authorities. Everything possible was done by the kaimacan, who ordered an allowance to be made to our man whilst unable to work, and that the government doctor should attend him. The latter, however, was complained of by the friends of the invalid, and when, in obedience to our summons, he appeared, he averred that his pay was so small and so far in arrears that he could afford to do nothing more without more money. As we had always intended to give him something, we gave him a part now, though rather annoyed at the request and the means taken to enforce it. We made the mother of the wounded man happy with a present to enable her to get any small

necessaries or comforts, as the government allowance ordered by the kaimacan, though nominally large, was small in reality, owing to its being paid in caimé.

Having settled everything as well as we could, and leaving a further sum for the doctor in case he gave satisfaction, we started off on the road to Homs, first making a final round of visits to kaimacan, cadi, and other notabilities. After a late breakfast at the Hôtel de Palmyre we rode off northwards, accompanied by a zaptieh who had been detailed to serve as our guide and escort. Like many of his comrades, he was a very good fellow, and, from having served during the Crimean war, had often come in contact with the English, for whom he professed a great veneration. Curiously enough when we asked him if he remembered the names of any of the officers, he mentioned a relation of Schaefer's who had held a commission in the Turkish army at that time as having commanded his brigade.

It was with mingled feelings that we rode away from Baalbek, for though we were glad to be again on the road after such an unforeseen delay, the ruins seemed to grow upon us, and as we lost sight of them it seemed like leaving old friends.

Our first march was to Lebweh, about seventeen miles from Baalbek. Just outside Baalbek were many tombs and artificial caves, but further on, though the valley was broken by small hills, forming the watershed between the valley of the Orontes and the streams running south, it was fertile and fairly cultivated, much ingenuity being displayed in utilising the rivulets flowing down from the mountains, though in many places the cuts and watercourses were allowed to get in bad order as the people never think it worth while to repair them until it is absolutely necessary. Close to our camp were the black tents of some of the semi-nomads who inhabited the valley further north. They pass the cultivating season in their villages and the rest of the year in wandering about in

search of pasture for their numerous flocks and herds.

Next morning saw us on the road betimes, the country becoming more open as the valley between the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon ranges widened out towards the fertile plains round Homs. The road was level, and by its side ran a small watercourse carefully banked up till sufficient fall had been obtained to work a mill, and then the canalisation began again below till another mill was reached. These mills were evidently of great age, and the canal was also used at certain seasons for irrigating large tracts of arable land lying by its western side. All along the way were many flocks and herds, and the encampments of their owners who were taking advantage of the canal to wash their sheep and clothes, not before the latter needed it and badly too.

In the afternoon we arrived at a large and flourishing village, and were entertained by the shaykh with narghilehs and coffee, whilst our tent was being pitched. As we were sitting

before his door a number of Circassians rode up, the first we had seen since leaving Beirut. They were the precursors of a party who were expected to arrive from Tripoli to settle in some ruined villages near. One could not help looking at these men, who had for the second time within a quarter of a century been driven from their homes by the unrelenting hatred of Russia, without feeling a certain degree of pity and interest, though from the stories of their lawless character—stories, alas! only too true, as we afterwards found—it appeared to us as if it might have been wiser to have deprived them of the Winchester rifles and other arms, with which they were loaded, and which they are apt to use on very slight (or no) provocation, ere they were permitted to wander about the country.

From the shaykh, who visited us in our tent, along with a man who called himself the doctor of the place, we were astonished to find that all the population about, whom, with their tents, their cattle, and their horses, we had been

taking for specimens of nomad Arabs and their belongings, were Christians, possessing houses and villages, who settled down for a large portion of the year as cultivators of the soil. At this village ('Kaht) they were building a large Church, using for the purpose the stones of a half ruined castle of the middle ages. The medico was a curious and quaint specimen of a shrewd charlatan. He had an imperfect knowledge of French and Italian, said he had taught himself all he knew, and boasted of possessing an infallible remedy for malarious fevers, consisting of an extract of some herb which grew near the streams, but what the plant was he refused to disclose to us. Both he and the shaykh looked forward with apprehension to the settlement of the Circassians in their neighbourhood as they are fanatical Moslems, though very indifferent observers of their religion, and are much given to plunder and robbery. From 'Kaht northwards lie open and well-watered plains with numerous villages, some possessing the

remains of old fortifications and towers; many now deserted and destined to become the property of the Circassians.

In some places the ground was being ploughed to prepare for sowing wheat, and in others the harvest of Indian corn was going on. All seemed life, and peaceful life too, not at all according with one's preconceived notions of the state of the Christians in Turkey. At K'sehr, our next camp, we found that under this peaceful exterior all was not so happy as it seemed.

The Indian corn had lately been gathered in and the people were busy shelling it out of its husks for the tax-gatherer to measure it and collect his dues. The tax-gatherer was an intelligent and pleasant young fellow who spoke French admirably, and had been educated at the French College at Beirut. He said the people were sadly over-taxed, that in addition to the tax for exemption from military duty levied on the Christians, of whom the population mainly consisted, the tithes and

other imposts amounted to over three pounds per head of the population, and that the government did nothing whatever in return.

The real nomad Arabs who live a short way to the east, a portion of the great Aneizeh tribe, often come down and demand wheat and other grain from the villagers for themselves and their horses, and if they are not supplied peacefully they take it by force. In times of plenty the people usually give it to them freely in order to avoid worse things happening, but when compelled by scarcity they hide their stores and refuse to give them up, the Arabs retaliate by stealing their live stock, and had quite lately stolen four horses from this very village. It is of no use complaining in the cities, as the Arabs have friends in high quarters, and even if the Government were disposed to punish them it has no means of doing so.

From K'sehr to Homs all is level country, fitted for the cultivation of wheat, the long lines of the furrows reminding one of the story

of the farmers in Western Canada who plough them so long that one out and home again is a day's work for a man and a team of oxen. Here we had an amusing display of our bold Chaldean's courage. Schaefer and I were riding some way in advance and he was half way between us and the mules, when we heard some firing near them, and looking round saw a large party close to them and the smoke of musketry. We turned and galloped back, telling him on the way to follow us. On arriving at our baggage we found that the strangers were a wedding party escorting a bride to her new home, and that the shots we had heard were signs of rejoicing. Looking for the Chaldean we saw him a long way off dismounted and trying to hide himself behind his horse. When we came back to him we asked why he had galloped away instead of following us. He declared he had heard no firing, and had not understood us when we told him to come back, and that he got off because he was tired of riding and wished to

walk, though the moment he found there was no danger he mounted again.

Just before we reached Homs we were met by an officer and half a dozen mounted zaptieh who had been sent out to escort us in, and who, after the usual fantasia of galloping round about us and firing off their arms, took us to a good place to pitch our tent, and, leaving some of their number as a guard, went off to announce our arrival to the kaimacan.

CHAPTER VI.

Emessa—Battle of Yermouk—A pithy speech—Former splendour—Number of inhabitants—Nahr el Asy—Inveterate thieves—Signor Luca Gabrielli—Episcopal hospitality—Djedvet Pasha—Financial abilities—A hint taken—Horse market—Jews, Turks, and Arabs—The Bishop—Price of horses—Djedvet's stud—Lady Digby—Scale of tips—Old Roman road—Kahat ibn Hosn—Strings of camels—Vultures and jackals—Khaled—An unequal contest—Nahr el Kebir—Jisr Kama'a—Kahn el Bek—A gentleman's place—Nahr el Barid—Soldier fishes — Arrive at Tripoli — Monsieur and Madame Blanche.

HOMS, the ancient Emessa, lies a little to the north-east of the lake of the same name, in the centre of fertile plains, well watered by the Nahr el Asy. At the time of the conquest by the Arabs, Homs shared with Baalbek the pre-eminence amongst the towns of these regions, and was able to send out to meet the advancing foe, under the conquering Khaled, a

force of five thousand well-equipped horsemen and a proportionate number of infantry, which for a time stemmed the path of the fanatical Moslems. Had it not been for the stratagems of the latter, Homs would have been able to hold out until the arrival of Manuel, who was marching southwards with the imperial troops, having sixty thousand Christian Arabs, as auxiliaries under Jabalah, who, owing to a personal pique, had transferred his allegiance and foresworn Mahommedanism. When the battle commenced on the banks of the Yermouk it raged long and fiercely, and it was many days ere the valour and fanaticism of the Arabs prevailed over the superior discipline and arms of the Greeks. When once the Imperial troops, however, were fairly beaten they had no rallying point, and though many fortified places held out bravely for long afterwards, the tide of success never deserted the conquerors. One curious historical parallel may be found in this battle of Yermouk, the Arab women stationing themselves in the rear of their army, and

driving back such of their men as attempted to fly with showers of abuse and blows; just as the old Scots wife at Inkerman attacked the Turks who were flying out of their redoubt across the rear of the Highland brigade with Gaelic execrations and a broomstick.

Khaled's speech to his army before the battle was short and pithy. "Paradise is in front of you, the devil and hell behind. Fight bravely and you will secure the one, fly and you will fall into the other." Not very complimentary to the Arab ladies.

In the twelve hundred and forty years that Homs has been subject to Mohammedan domination, she has sadly deteriorated from her former splendour, of which few signs remain, except the artificial hill which once formed the citadel, the remains of an ancient gateway more than half a mile from the mean walls which surround the shrunken city, and pieces of broken columns and carved capitals patched here and there into the buildings which form the modern town.

Notwithstanding this, Homs is still of considerable importance and wealth. Twenty thousand inhabitants dwell within the walls, of whom five thousand are Christians, the remainder being all followers of Mahomet. Of the Christians about three hundred are Roman and Greek Catholics and fifty attend the teachings of a native catechist employed by the American missionaries at Tripoli; the remainder being Syrians and Greeks, with a sprinkling of Maronites.

The Nahr el Asy, flowing near the city, is employed to irrigate extensive gardens and plantations of mulberry trees, on the leaves of which numbers of silkworms are fed. The sound of the large reels, usually worked by mules, on which the silk is wound, continues day and night, and it was some time ere we could make out what the peculiar droning noise was. Cotton is grown on the banks of the Nahr el Asy, and both it and silk are extensively manufactured and sold to Arabs and other natives of the country. Good carpets,

much resembling Persian ones, are also made and sold at a very cheap rate. The exports to the coast consist principally of wheat, hides, and wool, and amount to over forty thousand tons per annum.

Our arrival was the signal for visitors and all the idlers of the town to turn out to stare at us; amongst the latter were numbers of Circassians, against whom we were warned as inveterate thieves, a character which, I am sorry to say, they thoroughly deserve. As the officer who had come out to meet us was placed in charge of a guard stationed round our tent, we had no fear of any pilfering.

As soon as our tent was up we received messengers asking when we would be ready for visitors. We pleaded for time for a bath and a meal, which was granted. Our dragoman was very anxious to know what he should wear on this occasion, being anxious to show off the frock-coat and paper cuffs and collars, on which and similar articles the greater portion

of the money advanced for his outfit had been expended.

The first visitor who arrived was the kaimacan, with a small suite of other officials, and he told us that the wali of Damascus was stopping here on his way back to his seat of Government, having been to Constantionple on business. The kaimacan had not much to say for himself, and could give little information about the place. Our friend the kaimacan at Baalbek had telegraphed to take especial care of us, and hence the escort and guard, and many other tokens of attention which we might well have dispensed with. Whilst he was with us, Signor Luca Gabrielli, an Italian native of Cyprus, who had been a resident here for thirty years, came to call and offer us the shelter of his roof, saying that as soon as he had heard we were coming he had prepared rooms, which he now begged us to come and occupy; the kaimacan, too, said that the Bishop had been told to exercise episcopal hospitality towards us. Although we felt tempted, we thought it

better to refuse both these offers, and remain under canvas, with all our animals and belongings under our own eyes.

As soon as the kaimacan left, we went to call on Djedvet Pasha, the wali of Damascus. We found him in a large room in a private house, without any state of guards or followers. Like all other Turks in high places, he was very civil and complaisant, and talked pleasantly of what our projects were. His notions on the matter of the railway were very vague, and he did not seem to be as shrewd as other pashas to whom we talked on the subject.

Nevertheless, under this apparently simple manner, he must have possessed some brains, as his government of the province of Damascus, notwithstanding the Russo-Turkish war, was, according to Eastern ideas, most successful. Shortly after our seeing him, he was succeeded by Midhat Pasha, and when Khaireddine Pasha became Grand Vizier, Djedvet was made Minister of Commerce there, no doubt, to exercise those financial abilities of which he

had shown himself to be possessed whilst at at Damascus.

When we got back to our tent we found people coming and going, and visit succeeding visit, till it became rather monotonous. At last, when it was getting on towards ten, and we saw no prospect of ridding ourselves of our visitors in any other way, we commenced our preparations for bed, which had been hitherto deferred. The hint was taken, and we were left to ourselves.

In the morning we first went up to look at the market, where we had been told we might have a chance of picking up a couple of good horses cheap. Although we went through and through the assembled crowd, all the animals we saw for sale were wretched garrons owned by Circassians, for which exorbitant prices were asked by their owners. The Circassians had also bullocks and sheep for sale, and as they could scarcely have brought them with them from Bulgaria in the crowded transports which conveyed them from Europe to Asia,

it is most probable that they had since their arrival been indulging their freebooting propensities. We sat down for a little in a *café*, in front of which this market was going on, to watch the proceedings. The gaunt hungry-eyed Circassians, in their sheepskin caps and long-skirted single-breasted coats, with rows of small pockets for cartridges on their breasts, each man's belt a perfect armoury, hustled about among the crowd of Jews, Turks, and Arabs; men and boys vaunting the value of their property in horn and hoof; but though there was much noise, little business was done. As we were tranquilly surveying the scene, smoking a narghileh and drinking a cup of coffee, several members of the town council came and sat down with us, and told us that if we wanted horses, they would send some down to our tent for us to see in the course of the day. They all insisted that the proper line of the railway would be from Tripoli. No doubt they were influenced by a desire to benefit their town and themselves, though they

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evidently understood much more about the requirements of a railway than could have been expected from people who had never either seen or had a good description of one.

After we had gone back to our tent, they all came to call on us in due form, and were succeeded by the Bishop and his staff, amongst whom was one who spoke French fairly. The Bishop was a fine, benevolent-looking man, without much to say for himself beyond profuse offers of hospitality. When we questioned him about the condition of the Christians, he said that at Homs they had not to complain of being worse treated than their fellow-subjects, though it was irritating to be always looked down upon as an inferior race. To the Bishop succeeded the son of Djedvet Pasha, who came to return our call on the part of his father, whom he excused on the plea that he was busy preparing to start for Damascus in a few hours. It was difficult, indeed, to find anything to talk to him about, as every subject we started the young bey professed to know nothing of.

Several horses were brought down to be shown us, but for all of them ridiculously high prices were asked, some idea having got about that we were commissioned to buy horses for some government, and would give the prices which had been given before by the agents of different sovereigns, notably of poor King Victor Emmanuel, the Empress of Austria, and the Emperor of Russia. Exaggerated accounts had also gone about of the prices the Blunts had given for horses the year before, and we were supposed to be willing to give the same. Three and four hundred pounds were asked for very ordinary animals, and the lowest price to which we could reduce them was sixty pounds for an animal for which I was willing to give twelve. The stud of Djedvet Paşha left some little time before he did, and there were certainly some very great beauties among them. Some of the horses were well filled out and possessed of great bone and substance, and of almost perfect symmetry, the only drawback being the rather straight shoulder, a defec

which is shared by nearly all of Arab blood. I believe that Arab horses have much deteriorated owing to the excessive in-breeding which has taken place since the days of Mahomet, and more during the last thirty or forty years than ever before. I cannot do better than refer those interested in this subject to Lady Anne Blunt's *Bedouins of the Euphrates*, where a table is given of all the different strains which are considered as of pure blood, and the whole question of breeding is elaborately gone into.

We had now to make our return calls, and were glad to find that we had only to visit the kaimacan and Signor Gabrielli, as the town council was not sitting, and the Bishop, who had been sent for to attend a wedding, would not be back before the next day.

The call on the kaimacan was slow and stupid, but at Signor Gabrielli's we found a nice house, well furnished in the Eastern style, with two beautiful rooms prepared for our reception. He gave us coffee, pipes, and sweetmeats of various kinds, and was very

anxious in his inquiries about the Marchioness of Ely, who had stopped with him some twenty years ago, and had sent him a silver claret jug as a *souvenir* when she returned to England. He was also curious about the English lady who is known out in Syria as Lady Digby, and is married to an Arab Shaykh, or rather to an Arab who has been raised to the position of a shaykh by his wife's money. As Lady Digby has a large house and garden on the outskirts of the city, she is naturally an object of much interest to all the inhabitants. At the time of our visit this house was closed, and her ladyship was residing in another belonging to her at Damascus. Many astonishing stories are told about her, the most curious being that she possesses the secret of eternal youth, and that though now nearly seventy years of age, she has the beauty and strength of a woman of five-and-twenty. If she has this secret, and wished at any time to leave her Arab home, there would be no difficulty in her finding employment and money in

London, now that Madame Rachel has again temporarily retired from business.

As we were leaving Signor Gabrielli's, his wife and daughters, handsome native ladies, beautifully dressed and ornamented, were brought out to be presented to us, and I never felt so awkward in my life as when they insisted on kissing my hands.

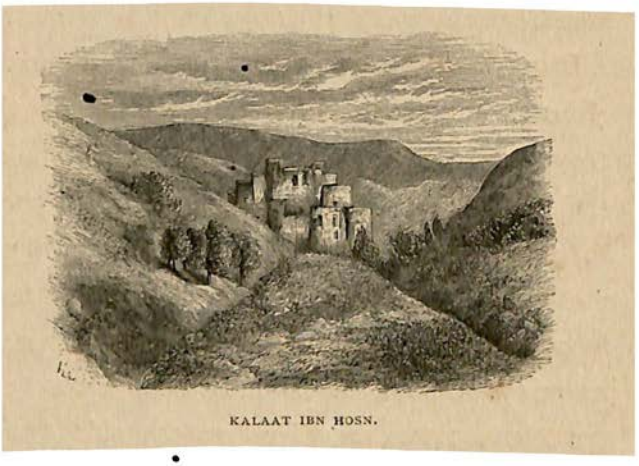
On our return to camp we found that a zaptieh who was to show us the road to Tripoli had arrived, and all was ready for an early start.

On leaving, in the morning, we were rather puzzled as to whether we should tip the officer, a yuzbashi, or captain, to whose care we had been entrusted. After some private discussion, we thought it best not, as he had always been made welcome in our tent, although he had preferred eating at his ease with the servants to taking his meals with us. Afterwards we found out that we had made a great mistake, and that it was the proper thing to tip all officers; there being a regular scale by which

he should have received half a sovereign, whilst, if he had been a bimbashi, or major, a golden pound would have been his fee. With their wretched pay, which is constantly in arrears, and, when paid at all, is paid in caimé, the poor fellows are not to be blamed, more especially as many are forced to be officers, whether they wish it or no.

Two miles through the gardens of the town, elaborately irrigated by the waters of the Orontes, brought us to a dam which holds back the stream for that purpose. It is used as a bridge, and when the waters are high, and it is submerged two or three feet deep by a rushing torrent, as often happens in rainy seasons, it is most dangerous to cross, but belated travellers on the side away from the town have no choice, as there is no shelter for several miles. Small channels are often made in it at such times, which are quite hidden by the water, and only to be found by poking about with poles. Horses and mules have to jump these at hazard, and often make

a bad shot and are drowned. Directly we had crossed the river we came upon the line of an old Roman road, which took us up by a gentle and practicable slope to the top of the hills between the plains around Homs and that of the Bukei'a. We halted for the night at Hadeedy, whence we could see the Bukei'a



KALAAT IBN HOSN.

below us, and away to our right front Kalaat ibn Hosn, an ancient castle, now a state prison of the Turks, where many a poor wretch is condemned to linger out a miserable existence. Kalaat ibn Hosn dates from the most remote ages, its earliest founders are supposed

to have been the Egyptians before the days of Moses, who erected it when they conquered the Hittites, at that time a numerous and powerful nation. Some traces of Egyptian architecture still exist, and all the succeeding masters of the country—Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Crusaders, and Turks—have left marks of their handiwork on this important fortress, which has in all but the most modern times been considered to command the chief route into the interior from the cities on the coast. Though Kalaat ibn Hosn enjoys the pre-eminence, many a small tower perched on the summits of the mountains, besides larger fortifications at Sofita and elsewhere, show how jealously this line has been guarded.

Enormous strings of camels were constantly passing us from the coast or overtaken as we cantered along. Some of these were upwards of a hundred in number. In one I lost count after one hundred and fifty, as I was trying also to count the number of the drivers and their donkeys. These numbers seemed

more than to bear out what we had been told of the importance of the trade between Homs and the coast.

Our tent was pitched for the night near a spring close to the village of Hadeedy, and one of the camel caravans off-packed hard by. The night was made hideous by the wrangling of jackals over the carcases of camels which had broken down by the roadside, and, after being relieved of their loads, had struggled on to the camping-place to die. These poor wretches are often to be seen with vultures and other carrion-eating birds perched on neighbouring rocks, waiting for their death, whilst pariah dogs, jackals, and foxes often tug and rive at their limbs ere they are really dead. There is a curious callousness among the natives, who are not actively cruel, and indeed are usually kind to their animals in a passive manner; but they seem to have no idea that it is better to put an end to an animal's life than to leave it in torture on the wayside to die a lingering death. Many a cartridge

have I expended in mercy to these poor creatures.

Descending from Hadeedy, we passed through some fine evergreen oaks, and crossed the Nahr el Kebir (big river) by an ancient Roman bridge, called Jisr A'chan, just where it issues from the Wady Khaled, so called as being that by which the dreaded Black Eagle standard of Khaled was seen approaching at the head of the succour he was bringing to Abdallah ibn Jaafer, step-son of Abu Bekr, the first Caliph, with five hundred Arabs. He had been waging an unequal contest against five thousand horsemen, who formed the wedding escort of the daughter of the prefect of Tripoli; Khaled and his men soon turned the scale, and the lady and forty maids, her attendants, formed part of the spoil of the victors.

The Bukei'a is a most beautiful and fertile plain, completely embosomed in the mountains, and is surrounded on all sides except the south by the Nahr el Kebir, which makes its exit by a narrow gorge at the south-western corner of the

plain. After traversing this plain, we again crossed the river, near another old Roman bridge, the Jisr Kama'a, which had been destroyed a few years ago by lightning. Apropos of this bridge, the old zaptieh who had been given us as a guide at Homs said: "In days gone by there were sultans who cared for the people, and made bridges and roads; now there is no sultan, and he who is called sultan does not care for his people, and eats their money and makes no roads or bridges; but when the English come that will be all changed, and we shall again have roads and bridges. Inshallah."

We crossed the hills by the present road, which is shorter than the way the old Roman road used to run, and passing through a quantity of scrubby oaks dignified by the name of a forest, went down a steep and sudden descent, to the level plains lying between the mountains and the sea. A short canter brought us to our camping-place close on the banks of the Nahr el Kebir, which had just issued from its gorge, and over which was

another Roman bridge. Close by our camp was a flour mill, and on the top of a steep bank a large building called Khan el Bek, built for the accommodation of travellers, and where builders were busy at work. The proprietor lives at Damascus, and leaves an agent in charge, whom we vainly besought to let us have one of a flock of fine geese which were running about. They were for the use of his master, and not one could he sell without his permission. From him, however, we got coffee and pipes to fill up the time till our mules and baggage arrived about an hour after us.

Next morning Schaefer and I decided to go on quickly to Tripoli, leaving the Chaldean behind, in charge of the baggage to come on more slowly. He rather objected, and swaggered about being a gentleman, and that a gentleman's place was not with the baggage. A short reminder of what he was was sufficient, but he was evidently trying to presume on our good nature, and I could easily see that matters would soon come to a climax.

At 6.30 Schaefer and I started with our Homs zaptieh, and cantered merrily across the plains, leaving the old man from Baalbek as guard for the mules. In a short time the towers and minarets of El Mina were visible, rising out of the sea at the other side of an enormous bay. We rode past villages surrounded by cultivation, and crossing one or two small streams beside the Nahr el Barid (cold river), which is spanned by a fine old Roman bridge, came into the gardens and olive groves of Tripoli. Just before entering the town we stopped to wind our horses under a shady tree, close by a tank of crystal-clear water and an ancient mosque. This is now called the Mosque of Ayesha, and was originally the Convent of St. John of Padua. The tank is full of a large sort of carp which are considered sacred by the Mussulmans, and during the Crimean and late wars to have had many of their numbers miraculously turned into soldiers who went to assist the Turks to fight the Russians.

When, owing to heavy rains in the mountains, the water turns red from the mud it brings down, the poorer people suppose that some of these soldier fishes (a marine battalion) have been killed or wounded. Eating these fish is believed to cause death, but the Christians of the mountains don't agree in this belief, and steal them whenever they have an opportunity of doing so unobserved.

Our horses rested, we went on quietly into the town and after much searching found the house of M. Blanche who unites in his own person the offices of French and British Vice-Consuls, and agent for the Messageries Maritimes. By him and his sister, Madame Blanche, we were most kindly and hospitably welcomed. We waited at his house until our mules arrived, when we formed our camp on the top of a small artificial tel or mound near a pretty fountain and large *café*, whence a glorious view was to be had of sea and gardens and also of the northern slopes of the Lebanon.

CHAPTER VII.

Chakir Bey—June Convention—A gutter urchin—Mejliss—Nicola Bey—Military service—Nazim Klat—"Divine figure of the North"—Gladstone and the Duke of Argyle—Moslem members—A shooting case and a fond embrace—The true story—An intelligent Turk—Preserved fruits and sweetmeats—American Missionaries—St. George—Afternoon tea—A warning—The Chaldean discharged—Gabriel appears—The Bazaars—Zimisces—Tower of Lions—Gabriel engaged—Leave Tripoli.

OUR mules did not arrive till nearly five o'clock, and the Chaldean was even later. When questioned as to what had kept him, he said he had been ill, and the servants all told the same story, but I could see that there was something behind the scenes. I trusted to time to reveal it, and said nothing. Just at sunset the governor of the town, Chakir Bey, came and sat down near our tent and sent to invite us to have coffee with

him. He is a native of Cyprus and spoke of sending his son back there, now that it is under the English Raj. Several other gentlemen of the town joined the party, and all agreed in thinking that the acquisition of Cyprus and the June convention were to do great things—Cyprus as an example of what good government should be, and the June Convention as enforcing sorely needed reforms in the protected provinces. After they went away we had our dinner, and the Chaldean was in great spirits and boasting of having talked to Turkish pashas on terms of equality. It must have been a change for a gutter urchin of Mosul to find himself amongst them; a fellow who, before he was taken up by the missionaries, and had received a veneer of false education, had regarded the pashas as amongst the greatest men on the face of the earth. The appetite he displayed seemed to be at curious variance with the story of his being ill.

Next morning all the Mejliss, or council of the

place, came to visit us, many of them Christians and well educated men, speaking French fluently and accurately. All of them were enthusiastic about the railway, and declared that Tripoli was the only place that could possibly be chosen. They volunteered to give land for the construction for nothing, though near the town it was all covered with valuable gardens and olive groves.

One of the most intelligent, Nicola Bey Nasouf, had been member for Tripoli during the short-lived Turkish parliament, in which he had spoken out fearlessly. He was most civil to us, and imparted his views freely; he said that at Tripoli the Christians had little to complain of, that they were as well represented as the Mohammedans on the council, but that the whole government was bad in execution, though many of the laws and rules were very good in theory. He wanted neither Turk nor Russian to govern, and until the Turk could be decently got rid of, was content with the idea of reforms to be carried out under English supervision.

The real future for which he yearned was a number of confederated states, either forming a republic or an empire, with free representation and religious equality. These, he thought, might be easily formed and might be protected by the powers. Until a new governing class should be educated he considered that the presence of European consuls, magistrates, and officers of the gendarmerie would be required, who might, as civilisation progressed, be replaced by natives of the country.

In all reforms, he said, the question of education was the most important, for though there are now many schools in the country, they are all the outcome of foreign and missionary enterprise, and could not be regarded as national or sufficient for the wants of the population. One great evil, he said, was the jealousy between the different schools and colleges, and the stirring up of religious questions by their professors. Many of the schools have secret subventions from the governments of the countries which support them, and the pupils

are imbued with the idea that the policy pursued by its protectors is the true one for the future benefit of Turkey. He did not wish the Mohammedans to be excluded from all share in the future government, as he said many of them were honest and well-meaning, were often victims of the system under which they lived, and with a proper administration would become good officials. The tax on the Christians for exemption from military service was, he considered, fair, and pressed less heavily on them than the conscription did on the Mohammedans, but in the future he hoped to see it done away with and all classes rendered liable to serve in the army, so as to obviate class jealousy and hatred. He was loud in his praise of English policy, but thought we might have done more to hinder the advance of the Russians, as, if we had acted more firmly, we should have been in a better position to dictate to the authorities at Constantinople than we now occupy after the Russian successes. He recognized our difficulties, and quite

understood the relative positions of the government and opposition, and how necessary it was in a free country like England to yield to the force of public opinion. He was in great delight at the idea of the June Convention having given England the right to enforce reforms in Asiatic Turkey, and hoped great things from her influence.

Rather a different character was his friend, Nazim Klat, who congratulated me on being the countryman of Gladstone and Argyle; the bag and baggage policy had excited his admiration, and he said he would like it carried out in its entirety throughout the Turkish dominions, though where the expelled officials were to betake themselves to he neither knew nor cared. He was an enthusiastic believer in the "Divine figure of the North," and in Russia as a civilising and liberating power, and thought we should have joined with the Russians in overturning the Turkish empire, though what was to succeed it he could not tell. His idea of Russian rule was founded

upon some of the wildest and vaguest expressions of the most pro-Russian part of the liberal press; perfect freedom of the press, entire religious equality, justice, mercy, an entire absence of bribery and corruption, low taxes, and no military service, were some of the most moderate of his expectations. He rather winced when we told him of the Russian rule in Poland, the enormous standing armies which are at the beck of the Czar, the knout, Siberia, the secret police, and other surroundings of the great liberator and civiliser of the nineteenth century. He held stoutly, however, to his opinions, and said he did not think such things could be, as they had not been mentioned by either Gladstone or the Duke of Argyle in any of the speeches or articles he had read.

The Moslem members of the council calmly sat and listened whilst they smoked their narghilehs and cigarettes and sipped their coffee, and all they said when it was finished was—"The war is over, and England is going to

assist us; with her help better days are in store for us. Inshallah." After a long and interesting visit these worthies took their leave. When they were gone the muleteers and servants said they wished to speak to me about the cause of the delay in arriving the day before; seeing which the Chaldean said he wished to speak to me first, and began thus—

"Oh, sir! you are a gentleman, and I know you will have pity on me," and then came a pause:—"What is it? Out with it, man," said I, after waiting a bit. "Oh, sir, I want some money." "What for?" "Oh, sir! oh, sir! yesterday I did shoot a man." "What! shoot a man? how did you manage that? Where is he?" "Oh, sir, he is not hurt. But yesterday I did see some tents, and did go and ask for milk, and did sit down, and then I take my revolver; it not loaded, I think, I show it, and it go off and shoot a man between two fingers, and hurt the skin; oh, I was so sorry, I cry, and I did take the dirty man in my arms and kiss him;

then they say I not go away till I pay; and I get money from Daher (the groom) and Halil (head muleteer) and pay them and come away; now Daher and Halil tell me I must pay them or they tell you."

I felt so much put out that I did not like to speak to him, and giving him the necessary money, went to find Schaefer. I told him the story and then we sent for Daher and Halil to hear their version. It was to the same effect, but from them we got the true story; the dragoman had gone to the tents with the Baalbek zaptieh and asked for milk, which the people wanted him to pay for, but he twitted them about their want of hospitality, and they gave it him. He and the zaptieh got off their horses and sat down and drank milk, and then the foolish fellow took out his revolver to prove what a great personage he was in being possessed of such a weapon, and began showing off how it acted (the story about his not knowing that it was loaded must have been false as it was a pin-fire one) when it went off and shot

off a man's finger. His companions set upon the Chaldean and disarmed him, and on the zaptieh interfering set upon him also, and disarmed and beat him. The Chaldean took advantage of this to get on his horse and bolt, and soon caught up the mules, which he halted. He then took all the people except one left in charge of the animals, back to the tents with him. On his return the Arabs had somewhat calmed down, and after some bargaining the matter was settled by his paying four napoleons which he had to borrow from Daher and Halil, to whom he gave his revolver as a pledge that he would repay them. He then told all the people to say that he had been ill, and not to tell us anything about what had really occurred, as he would do so himself in the morning; on finding that we had not heard they began to be afraid and decided to come and tell us; the Chaldean tried to dissuade them, but when he found that he could not change their determination he made the best of a bad bargain and confessed.

I consulted with Schaefer, and we decided not to speak to him till the evening, so as to be able thoroughly to weigh what we should say.

In the afternoon we called on Chakir Bey, who brought out an atlas and showed himself very intelligent and interested both about the railway and about my travels in Africa. He said it was no doubt a very good thing that there should be people who would go about exploring, but that for himself he preferred living in a comfortable house with people around him whom he knew, to wandering about in jungles and amongst savages. We also visited the Mejliss and afterwards Nicola Bey in his own house. The great drawback to all these visits was the quantity of coffee and cigarettes we had to consume. In private houses, jams, preserved fruits, and sweetmeats were also handed round, and one had to taste at least two or three before our kindly hosts were satisfied.

When we returned to our tents we found that Dr. Jessop and Mr. Hardin, American mission-

aries, had come to call, and nice, pleasant, gentlemanlike men they were. Besides their mission there are also American schools under the charge of Miss Thomson—daughter of Doctor Thomson, author of the *Land and the Book*,—and another lady. These we visited, and it was a pleasure to see the bright little children being taught by these two kindly American ladies, though the attendance was less than usual owing to it's being St. George's day in the Greek Kalendar, which is a great fête and holiday, St. George being held in even greater respect by the Greek Christians than by Englishmen. By the way, according to some legends, St. George's Bay, near Beirut, is the place where he killed the dragon.

On returning to our tent we found that Monsieur Blanche, his sister, and a young lady friend, who was on a visit to them, had come up to see us. We organised an afternoon tea, much to their amusement; and Monsieur Blanche, who is an old naval officer and a very

scientific man, was much interested in my stock of instruments.

Whilst we were chatting the Chaldean came in and sat down, and without removing his cap, or being introduced, attempted to enter into conversation with the ladies. After tea we sat outside enjoying the delicious evening air and beautiful sunset, till the falling dew reminded our guests that it was time to go away.

Soon after, when we began dinner, the Chaldean appeared to have become completely a Turk, for he did not even now remove his cap. When the servant came for tea I found the canister in use nearly empty, and asked who had been taking it. Says the Chaldean, "Get all the servants together, and I will soon make them tell the truth!" As we had already for some time suspected him of pilfering our tea, this was too much, and I decided that his lesson must be administered at once. I sent the servants away and closed the tent doors, and reminded him that by his own confession

he had not only told us a falsehood the day before, but had caused the servants to tell one. I warned him that if anything of the sort occurred again he would be discharged, and that he was giving himself too many airs. His keeping on his cap in the presence of ladies and at meals was not the custom among European gentlemen, and if he wished (as was evident) to be considered and treated as an European, he must conform to their manners; but if he wished to be considered and treated as a native, he must adopt the fez, which he could always keep on if he chose. His reply was to remove his cap,—a semi-military forage cap with a chinstay, of which he was very proud. Schaefer and I then thought it best to leave him to his meditations while we had our coffee, and indulged in our hubble-bubble.

When we returned to the tent, the Chaldean instantly attacked me, asserting that I had made him the laughing-stock of the servants. I reminded him that he had

brought it on himself, and told him once for all that if he was to remain with us he must make up his mind to obey orders, and tell the truth, and that if he couldn't do that, he could leave at once. He began to pretend to cry, and said he had never been treated in such a way, and then tried to wax indignant, and became very impertinent indeed. I told him if he did not keep quiet I should put him out of the tent then and there, and that he could consider himself as discharged. He suddenly calmed down, as he had calculated on our being afraid to get rid of him. I told him he could stop in the tent for the night, but that on the morrow at daylight he would have to pack up and go.

When the morning came he pretended to pack and unpack, and looked for signs of our relenting, but none being visible had to take courage to ask for a mule to remove his traps. One was gladly given, and he was paid up to the moment of his leaving, so that for his fortnight's work he had received about forty

pounds, when his outfit and hotel bills are taken into account; and we gave him enough to pay for a second-class passage to England.

When he was gone we received an early visitor. A nice pleasant-looking, rosy-cheeked boy came to the tent, and after saying good morning asked if he could come in and talk to us. He said he had heard of my African journeys and had asked Miss Thomson, who had been kind enough to teach him English, if she thought I would mind his coming to see me. He was a jolly, bright boy, spoke both French and English very fairly, and was pleasing and gentlemanlike in manner. When he left, Schaefer said, "*Ah! si nous avions un tel joli gamin pour remplacer cette bête de Chaldé, que nous serions heureux.*" Little did we then think that the wish was to come true.

We spent the rest of the morning wandering about the town and inspecting the bazaars, the curious little shops, the long narrow streets, all arched over at top and dimly lighted by grated *louvres*, each street being mainly devoted

to one trade or calling. The numerous streams and fountains, the porters, donkeys, Circassians, Arabs, townspeople, peasants from the mountains, water-carriers, itinerant pedlars, dervishes, monks and many others formed a curious picture of an eastern town which, though in constant communication with the west, has never lost its old world charm, and which but for the rare appearance of some official or modern Turk in semi-European costume is well-nigh unchanged since the days of its treacherous conquest for the Arabs by that arch-traitor and renegade, Youkenna, in 639. The surprise of Tyre and Tripoli by Youkenna caused the Emperor Constantine[1] finally to lose heart, and abandoning his Asiatic dominions, take refuge with his family and treasure at Constantinople, thenceforward to be the headquarters of the Eastern Empire till its final fall. Tripoli was almost the only place of importance which

[1] It is not quite certain whether it was Constantine or his father Heraclius who was emperor at the time of the fall of Tripoli and Tyre.

held out for the Moslems, when the conquering arms of the Emperor Zimisces once more placed Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, and nearly the whole of Syria, under Christian authority during one of those brilliant gleams of light which occasionally illumed the decline of the Roman Empire. The possession of these seaports gave the Arabs the opportunity of showing that however daring and fortunate they might be on shore, their successes on board ship were to equal, if not surpass, those they had gained in many a stricken field on terra firma. Without these ports the fleets which soon after blockaded the Emperor in his European refuge at Constantinople, and whose captains he was glad to pay with the accumulated treasure of ages to raise the siege, could not have been collected, and without the possession of these fleets the Arabs could never have extended the power of the crescent through Africa, Spain, and Sicily, and even to the south of France, by a series of exploits which more resemble the visions of some

mighty poet than records on the sober page of history.

When we came back to our tent Messrs. Hardin and Jessop had come again to see us, to invite us to lunch; so we went down to El Mina, where they lived, taking a round through the gardens and along the sea-beach past the "Tower of Lions," and two other ancient towers, constructed principally out of the ruins of still more ancient buildings, slender Greek columns being used as rafters on which to lay the floors of the different storeys. These towers are now falling into ruins, and that of the Lions is used as a manufactory where the coarse red pottery is made which enters so abundantly into all eastern life.

The homelike rooms where Mr. and Mrs. Hardin lived were a pleasant change for a short time from our tent-life amongst Orientals, and Mrs. Hardin and her little daughter completed the charm. After luncheon we called again on Miss Thomson, and in the

course of conversation she said, "What a good thing it would be if you could take Gabriel el Haddad as your interpreter!" Gabriel proved to be our young acquaintance of the morning, and the idea once started was soon acted on. His eldest brother, a clever young doctor, who had been educated at the American College at Beirut, entered warmly into the scheme, and undertook to broach the subject to his parents. The mother found it hard to make up her mind to part from her youngest boy, but thinking that it would be a good thing for him, sacrificed her feelings. As soon as he was ready, his preparations being quickly made, we took our leave of Tripoli and all our kind friends, being accompanied some way out of the town by Monsieur Blanche, his sister, and their lady guest, as well as by Gabriel's eldest brother. From these we parted at the Mosque of Ayesha, and once more were fairly on our travels.

CHAPTER VIII.

Old Roman road—A useful present—The wounded man—No barley—Requisitioning—*Arrahmy ! Arrahmy !*—The Wadys Eyne Soody and Kara Chibôk—Tiring work—The dealers and the Shaykh—The granary of the world—The best route—Foxes—Tip—A *Massu*—A proffered escort—Halil's warning—An astonished headman—Fair shooting—Import *versus* export—Families moving—Wild goose and snipe—A zealous retriever—Again reach Homs—Old friends—Rumoured arrivals—Comical French—Tip stolen—Dishonest cook.

DURING our stay at Tripoli we had sent back the zaptieh who had come with us from Baalbek and Homs, and now in their stead had two brothers who were to show us the passes by which the old Roman road to the interior worked through the hills. This road, which connected with one running all along the coast from Beirut to Tripoli and Latakiah, used to

be the main route for communication with the interior.

Directly after we had parted from our friends, Monsieur and Madame Blanche (amongst other presents Madame had given us a French cookery-book, which we found most useful), we began the work which I had in view, of making a survey of the route. This, of course, entailed some work, and we did not the first day get more than half way to Khan-el-Bek. All the ruins of ancient towers and fortresses made admirable marks for the triangulation, and the work went on as well as could be expected. On the second day we passed the tents to which the poor man who had lost his finger had belonged, and went to make inquiries about him, but could find out very little. He had, we were told, lost one finger altogether and another was damaged, but as he had no wife or relations, when he said he was going to leave his people no one interfered with him, and no one knew where he had gone. This was not very satisfactory, and we had to be

content with leaving a letter for him to give to Gabriel's doctor brother in case he should return and require medical assistance.

In the evening, when we arrived at Khan-el-Bek, there was no barley to be obtained for our horses, of which we now had four, having bought two more at Tripoli, which we had named the "Pasha" and "Zaptieh." What we were to do no one could say: the keeper of the khan said he had none; the miller said all he had was the property of people who had sent it to be ground, so that he could not let us have any. Whilst we were in this dilemma a string of camels, loaded with grain for a merchant at Tripoli, came by. We appealed for some time to the drivers in vain. We offered them double the price at Tripoli, and to give them letters to Chakir Bey and their employer to clear them from all blame, but they proved obdurate. In vain did we tell them that we knew that some of the camels were loaded with grain to feed them at Tripoli, as they would

never pay Tripoli prices for their forage. No, they could do nothing. One of our zaptieh, however, appeared on the scene, and seizing the bridle of one of the camels, forced it to kneel down, and took off its load. We remonstrated against this high-handed proceeding, but he laughed and said the man was in reality only holding out for a high price. The driver now began to abuse the zaptieh for having spoilt his market, and let us have the barley we required. We paid him well, gave him a present and the letters, and he went on his way rejoicing. We saw the man some days after, and he returned the letters, saying he had found no use for them, but begging for more baksheesh on that plea. Although we had already overpaid him for what he had done, we gave a medjidie, when he said he would go home and tell his wife what generous people the English were.

During the night we had numerous alarms of robbers—"*Arrahmy! Arrahmy!!*" was the cry every half hour during the night. I am

inclined to think that they were false alarms, made to impress us with an idea of the watchfulness and zeal of our servants and zaptieh. One of the latter gave a great yell, and said he had been knocked down by a large stone, thrown from a tree. When I went to where he was lying, he urged me not to fire in the direction in which he said the robbers were gone. He pretended at first to be very much hurt, and showed marks of mud on his white coat, but the stone could not be found; the only thing which might have been thrown was a clod of earth, and as his brother could not be found for some time afterwards, I suspected that the pair had made up the game between them. If they did, they were true to their promise in showing us the road through the hills; and next morning we worked up through the Wadys Eyne Soody and Kara Chibôk, which anastomosing, in the middle of their length, formed an easy ascent to a village at Tel Kala'ach, the highest point between the Bukei'a and the sea.

In many places the old Roman road is very perfect, and often might be used for a railway, though in others its gradients were, of course, too steep for locomotives. Nowhere would gradients of over one in one hundred and fifty be required, whilst with a very small amount of labour even that would be greatly reduced. The Wadys were so wooded, and the path curved in and out so much, that the keeping up the connection between the different points selected for the stations to take angles at was very difficult. I was off and on my horse every ten minutes, and sometimes oftener, so that both of us were glad when we arrived at our camping-place. I had then to write up my field-book and receive visits from some corn-dealers settled in the village, and from the young shaykh over whom they had established a complete ascendency. The worthy dealers said they would be very glad indeed to see a railway as far as we had come, but should not like it to go any farther, as the trade,

which now passes through their hands, would then go by without giving them any profit. Now, they said, they did a very fair business, as they bought all the wheat of the surrounding villages at the same price as if they were much farther from the coast, and as they had comparatively little to pay for carriage, they made large profits. If a railway were made as far as Tel Kala'ach they would, they argued, be in a still better position, but they objected to having one for the benefit of their competitors who were farther a-field. In vain did we tell them that the power of absorption of cereals in Europe, and especially in England, was so great that it would be well-nigh impossible to over-stock the market, and that with cheap carriage Asiatic Turkey would again become what she was in earlier ages, the granary of the world. Short-sighted, grasping, and cunning, they would not look beyond their own petty and immediate interests. When they left, the young shaykh remained to talk and stare, and whenever we

told our servants to get anything, he, with the open-handed hospitality of his Arab ancestors, sent to his own house for it. He was very simple, and we soon found out that he and his fellow-villagers were completely at the mercy of the dealers, who had advanced them money, and by degrees, as it is all over the world, had become their real proprietors, *corps et biens*, and only abstained from pushing their exactions too far for fear of killing the goose which laid the golden eggs. Notwithstanding all these interruptions, I managed to get my work fairly done and to obtain *renseignements* on the next day's route. I found the best way was by Hadeedy. The Wady Khaled—which I had had some thoughts of ascending to see if by it a more easy road might be found to the neighbourhood of the lake of Homs, a few miles to the southward of the town—I was told rapidly became a mere ravine, and finally a torrent-bed on the northern slope of the Lebanon.

Leaving early next morning we found an

easy and gentle slope down to the Bukeia, and on the way managed to bag several plover, besides having a stalk after a couple of foxes and seeing some hares. Our zaptieh told us that greyhounds were to be got that would course anything, gazelle, hares, foxes, and jackals; and we determined as soon as might be possible to get some in order to amuse us on the way. At Tripoli we had bought from two small boys, who were dragging him about, a little mongrel terrier—which had evidently strayed from some ship—for the large sum of fivepence, and the little beggar was here, there, and everywhere after the hares and foxes. In the evening we arrived at Hadeedy, having just before put a camel out of its misery. The poor brute having fallen and broken its leg, the owner had simply transferred its load and saddle to other camels and left it to its fate, and seemed much surprised at our wasting a cartridge on it.

At Hadeedy we took up our old camping-place, and soon after we arrived, Daher, the

groom, who spoke a most comical sort of French, announced a *Massu* who wished to speak to us.

The *Massu* was a horseman who said he had just been paying a visit to the headman of the village who had begged him to come to make his apologies for not calling on us, as he had only just returned from a journey and was very tired. Our visitor told us that he himself was the headman of a neighbouring village, and that as the road to Homs was very dangerous, he would come with twenty cavaliers as an escort to protect us from all harm and do us due honour. We begged him not to take the trouble, and assured him that we were perfectly able to take care of ourselves, as besides the two zaptieh armed with Winchesters, we ourselves also carried Winchesters in addition to our revolvers, and that if we were attacked we could keep up a pretty severe fire for some time without having to reload.'

We carefully explained the mechanism of these weapons to him, but apparently he was

not to be moved from his purpose, as he said the sight of an escort would deter robbers from making an attack, whilst the arms would only repel one after it had been made. He vehemently asserted that it was necessary for his honour to come and take care of us, but we politely though firmly declined his offer. At last he went away, but came back again to say that he would certainly join us soon after we started.

Once he was fairly away, Halil who had often travelled by this route, came to warn us not to trust him, as he was a bad character, and had never been near the headman of Hadeedy at all, and as most probably his escort was proffered with the intention of attacking us unawares. We thanked Halil for his caution, and decided before starting to go and see the headman to find out whether it was true the Massu had been to see him. Against the headman Halil also warned us, but said we should be able to judge in the morning from the answers he made when we

called, if we did not send to him to announce our intention.

Night was rendered hideous by the jackals, who were tugging and tearing to pieces the unfortunate camel I had shot, and who would, but for that, have been devoured alive. Early next morning I went to see the skeleton, which was well nigh bare. A few disgusting buzzards and carrion crows were still at their work as scavengers, but the jackals had fled at dawn.

We then mounted our horses and rode into the village and asked for the headman. After some delay he was brought out winking and blinking from an inner chamber. We excused ourselves for disturbing his slumbers, and begged to thank him for his kindness in sending us our visitor of the last evening. His astonished air, and question of "What visitor? I sent no one!" satisfied us that Halil's warning was well timed; but he soon recovered himself, and not wishing to spoil his friend's chance of plunder, said that on second thoughts,

he remembered having sent the man and having asked him to escort us. Thanking him again for his courtesy, we departed, fully determined to keep our weather eyes lifting if the promised escort should appear, and gave our sporting guns loaded with buck shot to the servants, so as to increase our fighting power in case of necessity.

A pleasant ride and some fair shooting was all that was remarkable on this day's march, the chance of our being attacked soon fading from our minds. We halted for the night at a dirty village with the gardens and minarets of Homs full in view.

The comparative paucity of the import as compared with the export trade was easily seen by the long strings of camels winding their way from the coast, mostly unloaded, the others carrying either Manchester goods or American paraffin, paraffin being imported into a country which might supply the world with it, and where, in its ruder forms, it has been used as long as history has been written. Such is the

effect of the crass ignorance and apathetic stupidity of many of the ruling class.

The numbers of families who were travelling with all their scanty belongings packed on camels and donkeys, and who evidently were not nomads, pointed to an unsettled government. We asked some of these little troops, composed of all ages, from the grey-bearded old man unable to walk, down to the newly-born babe, what they were tramping about the country for. The answer was nearly always the same. The village they were quitting had dwindled down in numbers owing to sickness and the war. In consequence of this, the taxes, which had been assessed at the last census according to the then population, had begun to press heavily upon the reduced numbers, and they were going to some town or village which had not been so unfortunate, where they hoped to find life less burdensome.

This same reason causes the concentration of people in the large towns where they live

in dirt and misery, suffering from hunger and disease, whilst fertile lands are left uncultivated, where they would not only be able to find a comfortable livelihood, but with care and industry might easily become rich and prosperous.

From our camp a long gentle slope took us down to the banks of the Orontes. Lapwing and plover were plentiful, and as we were carrying our scatter-guns instead of our rifles, we managed to bag a few as they started up at the sound of our horses' feet. We arrived at the river a long way in advance of our people, and picketing our horses we left them in charge of one of the zaptieh, and started along the banks of the river in search of snipe and duck. The first thing was a lucky shot with a Winchester at a wild goose about one hundred and twenty yards off, which very much disgusted some native sportsmen, who had been crouching behind small shelters of rushes and stones since the early morning in the hopes of something coming within easy range, and had hitherto shot nothing. Some lovely bits of half swampy

irrigated ground gave us some snipe, Schaefer bagging three couple to my one and a half. In addition I got a teal, though through missing with my first barrel, I lost the right and left I ought to have had, as a couple had risen close together.

It was Gabriel's first experience of sport of any kind and he was wild with delight, and acted as retriever with great zeal, splashing through the mud and water after the fallen, crying out that every bird he saw which he did not know the name of, was a goose, and begging one to shoot it.

This little bit of sport over we returned to the horses, and the mules having arrived went on across the river and through the gardens to the town. We pitched our tent in the same spot as before, and we were soon again the centre of attraction. There shortly appeared on the scene the form of our old friend the worthy Kaimacan, the one who had been at Baalbek, when we were there, and who as soon as he came within hail shouted out

welcomes. He made inquiries about our dragoman, and when he heard the story of the Chaldean, and how he had been replaced by Gabriel, congratulated us heartily on the change and told us that he had known that the other did not speak the truth, but that he had not wished to risk losing our friendship by telling us of it.

Signor Gabrielli came again to renew his offers of hospitality, but we preferred remaining in our tent. Soon after we received news that the English Consul from Aleppo and the Mutesarif (lieutenant-governor) of Hamah were about to arrive at Homs, the first from his station, the latter from Damascus, where he had performed the duties of Wali during the absence of Djedvet Pasha. This news, especially that about the consul, excited our expectations, and made us wonder what he could be doing so far out of his district. After all it turned out that the consul himself was not coming, but that it was only some horses he was sending from Aleppo to Damascus for Mr.

and Lady Anne Blunt that were to pass through during the night.

Next day being Sunday brought rest for man and beast. Gabriel went off to church in the morning, and Halil who was a Greek Catholic, and knew Schaefer to be a Roman Catholic, assailed him with "Pourquoi no marchez à église?" Even that was not his finest specimen of French; in the absence of Gabriel he was called in to explain an item in the cook's account, which he said was "Pour manger le Turc": what this could mean rather puzzled us, and it was some time before we could make out that the item in the account was food for the zaptieh who were with us.

Poor little Tip, the dog we got at Tripoli, was stolen from us by some Circassians in whose company he was afterwards seen, and though all the police of the place were put at our disposal we could not recover him. On going over our accounts again with Gabriel, we learned that we had been systematically cheated either by the cook or the Chaldean, or both, Gabriel knowing

the prices of meat, vegetables, &c., and having been often employed by his mother to make up her household books.

We had already suspected something of the sort, and now that we were rid of one we determined to watch the other sharply.

In the evening a great deal of noise and shouting announced the arrival of the governor of Hamah. Soon after, when things were quiet, we turned in, so as to be ready for our start northwards the first thing in the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

Gibbon—Metropolis of the plain—Rufus Avienus—The governor of Hamah—Arranging matters—A wheeled vehicle—Our friend the officer—A gentle hint—Tel el Beezy—A village of granaries—Mixed teams—Surplus of ortolans—Circassian beauty—Rusta—Roman bridge—Ibrahim Pasha—The rivals—Hamah—Toi—Shalmaneser—Ben Hadad—Chariots—A lively locality—Dangerous conjecture—Water wheels—Welcome—Maps of colouring—Visitors—A civil engineer—*Une bêtise*—A rabble rout—Circassians at work—Bazaars—The cook's accounts—French Vice-Consul—The Pasha—An excuse—Mares—The staff—Dropping the *rôle*—A small gift.

THE servants and luggage being despatched in advance, we first rode to the artificial hill which was the ancient citadel of Homs. The outer casing of masonry was still visible in some places, while on others it had peeled off. On the summit were remains of columns and ruins of Saracen fortifications, which had been con-

structed out of the Roman buildings that were destroyed to make room for them. Nothing else was visible to tell of its ancient grandeur except the Roman gateway before mentioned, and one or two other tels or hills which may also have been artificial. Gibbon says, "Among the cities which are enumerated by Greek and Oriental names in the geography and conquest of Syria, we may distinguish Emessa or Hems, Heliopolis or Baalbec, the former as the metropolis of the plain, the latter as the capital of the valley. Under the last of the Cæsars they were strong and populous: the turrets glittered from afar: an ample space was covered with public and private buildings; and the citizens were illustrious by their spirit, or at least by their pride; by their riches, or at least by their luxury. In the days of paganism, both Emessa and Homs were addicted to the worship of Baal, or the sun; but the decline of their superstition and splendour has been marked by a singular variety of fortune. Not a vestige remains of the temple

of Emessa, which was equalled in poetic style to the summit of Mount Libanus; while the ruins of Baalbec, invisible to the writers of antiquity, excite the curiosity and wonder of the European traveller."

In support of this he quotes from Rufus Avienus these Latin verses :—

"Emessæ fastigia celsa renident
Nam diffusa sola latus explicat; ac subit auras
Turris in cœlum nitentibus: incola claris
Cor studiis acuit . . . . .
Denique flammicomo devoti pectora foli
Vitam agitant, Libanus frondosa cacumina turget,
Et tamen his certant celsi fastigia templi."

If Homs was really more splendid than Baalbec, it must have been indeed magnificent. Now, the citadel serves as a quarry for the inhabitants, and was useful to me as a good point in my triangulation.

From the citadel we rode down into the town to call on the governor of Hamah, and found him surrounded by a number of the towns-people including the Kaimacan and members of the council. He was civil and intelligent,

and with a very pleasant manner, though he is suspected of arranging matters with the Aneizeh, so that they are allowed to plunder the villagers of his district without fear, on the condition that he shares the spoil.

He hoped to meet us again at Hamah, and said that if we arrived before him we were to make use of his name with the officials to obtain anything we might want. The Kaimacan and mejliss being with him, we were able to leave without making a formal call on them, which we were not sorry to escape. On leaving the house we met the only wheeled vehicle we had seen since those on the French road, except the two carriages which run between Tripoli and El Mina, viz., a Circassian bullock-cart—certainly the most diminutive and primitive machine of the sort I had ever set eyes on. The two bullocks which drew it were not larger than decent sized sheep. The wheels were made out of discs cut from the trunks of trees, and were far from round, and

the sides were rough planks or slabs of wood. This was loaded with the household gear of a tall Circassian, who goaded the unfortunate little beasts who drew it into a sort of shambling trot, to make them keep up with his swinging stride.

CIRCASSIAN CART.

As we left the town we were invited by our friend the officer who had been appointed to guard our tent, to take a parting cup of coffee, so as we had been told by Monsieur Blanche that the right thing to do was to tip him, we begged

of him to accept a small present, which he did readily enough. On this subject Monsieur Blanche told us a very good story. He took the captain of an English man-of-war up to see the castle at Tripoli, and on leaving, the Turkish officer refused the money offered him; however, after accompanying them a short distance, and when he was out of sight of his men, he said he would be very glad to take it. Monsieur Blanche rallied him on his mock-modesty, when he said, "I don't mind the men seeing me take money, but I should be ashamed if they saw me take so little." The hint was not acted on.

When we were fairly on our way a zaptieh rode up to us and insisted that he had been ordered to escort us, and would persist in accompanying us until, at Tel el Beesy, a village some way to the north of Homs, we overtook the mules and servants. We gave him a beshlik (about a shilling), and said if he followed us any farther we should neither give him anything nor should we pay for his

keep or that of his horse. Seeing we were in earnest, he left us.

At Tel el Beesy there is a village consisting above ground mostly of granaries, nearly all the people except the shaykh living in excavations underneath the tall bee-hive like constructions in which the grain is stored. The shaykh's house was situated on the summit, and from its roof we were able to see all round and get a good set of angles. Between us and Homs all was perfectly level, and so it was northwards to Rusta, where the valley of the Nahr el Asy broke the continuity of the plain. Large tracts of cultivated ground spread in every direction, and the people were all busy ploughing, some with pairs of oxen, others with mules, and others with horses, whilst in some cases oxen and mules or horses were yoked together.

Flocks of ortolan were scattered all about the newly-ploughed ground, and we got a good bag of them and plover, enough indeed to be able to feed our muleteers and servants as

well as ourselves. The ortolan were so plentiful that after a time we thought it too much trouble to get off the horses to go after them. The plover were more difficult to circumvent, and therefore gave more sport. All day long we were passing parties of Circassians marching to the south with troops of horses and cattle, and their household stuff (not much in all conscience) packed on mules or donkeys. I looked for traces of the famous Circassian beauty, but though many of the women did not hide their faces, there was not one but looked weather-worn and blowsy and without a trace of early good looks. Some of the boys and girls had the freshness of childhood. The men very much resembled the low Irish who infest the purlieus of Glasgow or Liverpool, and had the same furtive, half-cunning, half-simple look.

At Rusta we found the river Orontes flowing in a deep narrow valley which it had grooved for itself out of the level country. What centuries it must have required to do this is proved by the old Roman road and bridge, which

are at the right level for the river of to-day. Many remains of columns strew the ground for a long distance round the present miserable town, and a lofty artificial mound on the top of the promontory in the valley on which the city was built shows where the ancient citadel stood. From this mound we could see Homs, and the Tel el Beesy to the southward, and the citadel of Hamah to the northward. Our camp was formed in the middle of a quadrangular enclosure surrounded by vaulted stables for mules and horses, and with a small domed building in the middle, which report said had once been a mosque. These buildings, as well as part of the bridge, were ascribed to Ibrahim Pasha. If he built them he must have made use of the old materials which he found on the spot, the dome in particular being formed almost entirely of Roman bricks.

Owing to the delay caused by shooting, and taking angles and bearings, our servants had arrived some time before us, and when we dismounted we found that an old gentleman,

the chief of a neighbouring village, had taken charge of our cook and ordered coffee. This was rather surprising, but he told us if we had come to see him he would have had coffee made for us, and therefore he was sure we would not refuse him some now when he was away from his own home. Apart from this he seemed a good old fellow, and told us he was on the look-out for the mutesarif of Hamah, so as to get a complaint lodged against another head man before the latter should have an opportunity of speaking to the Pasha. Scarcely had he told us this when his rival rode in bent on the same errand. The two were perfectly civil to each other, but each was evidently determined to outwit his rival. After about ten minutes of compliments and coffee-drinking, they mounted and rode off in the direction of Homs in company.

Our ride from Rusta to Hamah was almost a repetition of that from Homs to Rusta, the only thing out of the common being my

breaking the stock of my fowling-piece, which I had slung to my saddle, by its striking a low wall I jumped. The same fate attended Schaefer's heavy rifle, which had been entrusted to one of the servants.

Hamah,[1] or Hamath, is one of the most ancient cities which have been continuously inhabited and known under the same name; it divides the palm in this respect with Jerusalem and Damascus. It is mentioned in

[1] Hamah is also famous as the town of Abu'lphéda, as we find in Ockley's *History of the Saracens*, where the following mention is made of him:—

"Abu'lphéda: his whole title is, Ismael ben Ali, ben Mahmoud, ben Mahommed; ben Amer, Shahinshah, ben Iyub . . . He is called Sultan, King and Prince of Hamah, in Syria, where he reigned after his brother Ahmed, surnamed Almâlek al Nasser, who was deposed in the year of the Hegirah, seven hundred and forty-three. As soon as Abu'lphéda began to reign he took the title of Almálec Alsâlehh, but he did not enjoy the dignity above the space of three years."

One of the books on which Abu'lphéda founded his universal history was the Book of Judges, which he employed a person skilled in Hebrew and Arabic to read to him.

the eighth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, v. 9 *et seq :* "When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him, for Hadadezer had wars with Toi" —and also in the First Book of Chronicles, chapter 18, verse 9.

There can be no doubt that this is the same Hamath, because just before we read about Hamath, we find that King David's object in his war with Hadadezer was to recover his borders toward the river Euphrates. In the latitude of Hamath the fertile land stretches right away to the Euphrates, whilst between Damascus and the Euphrates lies a large tract of desert.

Hamath is mentioned also in the Book of Joshua, where the "entering in of Hamath" is named as one of the boundaries of the promised land; the same expression is also used in the Book of Judges. It was conquered

by Solomon, lost by Jeroboam I., and recovered for the Israelites by Jeroboam II.

Hamath was famous likewise as being one of a league which resisted valiantly the overwhelming might of the Assyrians under Shalmaneser II.

The first two campaigns of Shalmaneser in this direction were futile, as although victorious in the field his armies were so much shattered in the conflicts that they were not able to retain their position. In the third he had only the troops of Ben Hadad and the southern Hittites to contend with, but notwithstanding was unable to make any lasting impression; and it was not until after the murder of Ben Hadad by Hazael, who usurped the throne, that Shalmaneser was able to firmly establish himself in these countries.

The names of the sovereigns who formed the league against Shalmaneser are Ben Hadad of Damascus, Adoni Baal of Sizana, Ahab of Jezreel, Tsakhulena of Hamath, and Gindibua the Arabian. Gindibua brought a

thousand camels with him; the strength of the remainder was in their chariots, of which they had over three thousand nine hundred.

Both the size of its graveyards and the number of its tombs indubitably prove Hamath to be very ancient, as there are tombs enough to contain many times the present population of over twenty thousand.

Our muleteers wished to camp among the graves. We preferred a more lively locality, and rode on through the town, much to the astonishment of the people in the bazaars, who could not imagine where we had come from. Some said we were the Russians come to seize the place—rather a dangerous conjecture for us, as the town was swarming with Circassians; but we soon explained who we were, and then, we found that though there may be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors, there is perplexity in a multitude of guides. Having chanced to ask one respectable-looking man where we could find a good place for our tents, so many were willing to tell

us the best, and each one differing as to what was the best, that we thought it wiser to trust to chance. After a little search we lit upon an open space on the banks of the river Orontes, close to a bridge and the tomb of a Mohammedan Santon. Hard by were some of the enormous water-wheels which are common along the lower course of the Orontes; driven by the force of the current, they raise the water of the river up into aqueducts supported on stone arches, which conduct it to the gardens on a higher level. One was on the opposite side of the river at the far end of the bridge, part of which acted as a dam so as to increase the current, which drove this wheel and a flour-mill halfway across.

We rode across the bridge to look at the curious wheel, when from the window of a café, which was on the first floor of the mill, we heard a voice exclaim, "*Soyez les bien venus, Messieurs.*" On turning round we saw rather a rakish-looking young Turk in fur coat and

fez, with a billiard cue in one hand and a cigarette in the other, leaning out and repeating his welcome. We returned his salutation and went on to the wheel, not without some little difficulty, as the horses were frightened by the noise and motion. It was an extraordinary combination of rough pieces of trees as spokes, and patchwork of planks for the circumference, but it seemed to answer its purpose well, as the aqueduct was full almost to overflowing. Where leaks occurred, or a stone was displaced at the edge, water streamed down the grey old stone-work, the cracks and crevices of which were filled with mosses and ferns. The wheel itself was stained black and green, ferns grew on the masonry supporting the axle, and with the background of trees and houses, with their gaily-painted latticed balconies for the use of the harems—all formed a mass of colouring which more nearly approached the usual ideas of the East than often occurs.

Our tent was soon up and our animals

WATER WHEEL AT HAMAH.

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picketted, when many came to call on us. A Circassian chief, who talked of wishing to be allowed once more to have a slap at the Russians; an Albanian Bimbashi, or major, in charge of the police; a native of Tripoli, who had been at the Beirut college with Gabriel's brother, but preferred commerce to medicine; a Levantine Frenchman, who enjoyed the titular rank of vice-consul, and others called. Close by our tent was the vegetable market, and we became the centre of attraction to all the loungers who in the East invariably hang about wherever business is supposed to be transacted.

Besides these, people came to worship at the Santon's tomb, and others displayed the paces and beauties of their horses and the docility of their mules and camels, in the vain hope of finding us ready purchasers.

When we were left a little to ourselves, in the growing dusk, the gentleman who had hailed us in French from the window of the café called, as he said one could not have

proper conversation when too many people were about. He informed us that he was a civil engineer educated in France, and had been employed by the contractors for the Adrianople railway, and on the abortive works near Angora. He wanted very much to see my instruments. I thought that his knowledge of them when they were shown to him did not quite tally with his description of himself, but he never for a moment lost his self-possession, and kept on saying, "*Ah, si je pourrais aller avec vous autres, je pourrais vous fournir des dons inestimables, mais, j'ai fait cette bêtise irréparable pour un jeune homme de me marier, et—dans ce trou-ci.*" We begged him not to put himself out, but he said that he would accompany us at least as far as Aleppo, and would place his services at our disposal. He heard of our wish to buy greyhounds, and said that he was on the most intimate terms with the mutesarif, who had two, and that he would ask him to give us them. With these and many other protesta-

tions of his desire to be useful to us, he went away, leaving us very much puzzled as to who or what he could be.

Soon after he had gone a rabble rout bearing lanterns and firing guns, came across the bridge and went out along the road to Homs. It was the council and garrison going out to meet the mutesarif. They soon returned with him in their midst, with a banging off of guns, thumping of drums, yelling of men, women and children which beggars description.

At last we were quiet, and not sorry for it, as we had had a tiring day; but it was long ere we got accustomed to the droning, creaking noise of the water-wheels, which sounded loud and close in the still night hours.

Next morning we were about betimes for a walk through the bazaar, where, for the only time during our journey, we saw Circassians usefully employed. They were busy replacing the wooden roofs of the narrow lanes of the bazaars by stone vaulting, and in some places

building new and more commodious bazaars. This work had been given them to keep them out of mischief and as some return for the allowance which the town was ordered to pay them by the central government. They did not take to work kindly, and our Circassian visitor of the day before, who met us during our walk, talked of it disdainfully as work unfit for men who should be warriors and nothing else.

We again met our engineer, who was very profuse in his offers of assistance, got me a piece of raw hide to mend the stock of my gun with, followed us about everywhere, and, sticking to us like a leech, came back to the tent with us. The Pasha, he said, was such a very rich man that he did not care for the salary of his office, and accepted no bribes. This did not agree with what we heard about the Aneizeh, but we hoped it might be true. As we intended to call on the Pasha after our breakfast, we asked this *soi-disant* friend of his to accompany us, as he might be useful on account of his command of French, and also

of his engineering knowledge. He promised most cordially to do so, and left us, saying he would soon return. During our morning stroll we had made inquiries about the price of meat, vegetables, &c., in the markets, and on our return set to work to overhaul the cook's accounts. One large item had been charged as meat, which we found was really money given to the groom to buy barley, and on asking him the reason for the false entry, he said that the Chaldean often took money from him and told him to charge it as something bought in the market; this partly explained the high prices we had been paying. After a bit came a heavy item for thirty pounds of rice bought that morning: we told him to bring it to show us. He came back with a sack full of grain, which he asserted was the rice, but which, on being opened, was found to contain the barley for the horses. He was dismissed on the spot, and we were left to our own devices and Madame Blanche's cookery-book to arrange our cuisine.

Breakfast over, the friend of Gabriel's brother and the French Vice-consul called on us and accompanied us in our visit to the Pasha. We told them that our friend, the civil engineer, was coming also. This made them laugh very much, and they told us he was no engineer, but a cook. He had been taken to France as a boy, and had there learnt to cook and to speak French, and had been cook to the contractors whom he had named as having employed him as engineer. As for his intimate friendship with the Pasha, he had come to Hamah as his cook, but although a good cook, he licked his fingers too often, and was finally dismissed for dishonesty.

We made our call in all due form, and the Pasha talked very intelligently, and made a decidedly favourable impression on us, his manner being, to use a French expression, "*sympathique.*" His offers of escort were grand in the extreme; he spoke of an officer and twenty men as the smallest number he could possibly allow us to proceed with, but at last, by

dint of hard begging, he consented to allow us to only go on with two.

On our return to our tent, we found our cook-engineer friend; he excused himself not having accompanied us to the Pasha's on account of a despatch from Homs, where urgent business, which he much deplored, demanded his instant presence. I do not know what the French vice-consul said to him, but it had the effect of making him suddenly leave off his conversation and go away.

The Frenchman now took us to see some very fine horses and mares, the property of different people in the town, and told us that many of them were of the pure Seglawi blood, the most prized amongst the Arab strains. The prices put on the mares were enormous, four and five hundred pounds being an ordinary sum. The filly is usually purchased among the townspeople by an association of three or four partners, who go shares in her produce, keeping her only for breeding purposes, and, contrary to

the practice of the Arabs of the desert, rarely, if ever, mounting her.

After we had seen the horses, the Pasha returned our visit, accompanied by all his staff in their best uniforms. We managed to supply coffee and narghilehs from the *cafe*, above the mill on the bridge. He was very anxious to know what the English were going to do in the way of reforms, and how we intended to ensure their being carried out. On both points we of course could say little. The worthy Pasha, with many of his colleagues, will no doubt be all civility to any officials appointed under the Convention, but he and they will make use to the utmost of that power of passive resistance which the Turk knows so well how to utilise, and which has so often baffled the good intentions of the Western Powers.

After his departure, and whilst we were packing up to start, the cook-engineer again appeared, entirely dropping the *rôle* of engineer, and coming as suppliant for the situation of cook, having heard that we had dismissed ours.

We were, we told him, obliged to refuse, as we could not allow so highly educated and civilised a gentleman to occupy a menial position in our party, and we could not have our cook in our tent with us as a companion, as it only had room for three. Long and earnestly did he urge his suit, but we proved firm. He wound up by begging for a little money, as he said he had nothing. After all he retired, apparently very well pleased with a gift of five francs.

CHAPTER X.

Clamorous zaptieh—The unfortunate officer—The Bimbashi—Bad discipline—Doubly gainers—Our Circassian warrior—Valley of the Orontes—Rice and cotton—Wayfarers—Regular tramps—Horse-dealers—Komhân—Magical instrument—Railway fares—The village blacksmith—Fatalism—Tyiby—Scarcity of water—*Chef de cuisine*—Greyhounds—Gazelle—A fool of a dog—Quantities of ruins—Khan Shaykh Haun—Modern patchwork—A general dealer—A curious carved door—Large tank—Silting up—Not a sale, but a gift—Easy ascent—Khanek—Delicate carving—A steaming morass—Bedouins—Ibrahim Pasha—A camping-place—Low-caste Arabs—Buy greyhounds—The trade of Mara—The available garrison—Guard of honour.

EARLY in the morning we found about a dozen zaptieh round our tent, all clamouring to go with us. We said that the Pasha had promised to send only two, but they insisted that they all had been sent; and when we refused to believe this a squabble ensued among them

as to who were to go. To add to the confusion two peasants appeared who accused some of the zaptieh of stealing their horses.

Knowing that we could do nothing ourselves to settle the matter, we sent for the officer who had been ordered to provide the two men for us. He had passed the order on to a chaoush or sergeant, who had merely given a general order that two men were to accompany us. All present set on the unfortunate officer and abused him vehemently for having given them the trouble to turn out. The men who were complained of by the peasants as having stolen their horses, being the loudest and most virulent in their abuse, were on the point of being ordered to go with us when we interposed, and said that the Pasha could not insist on our taking two men charged with theft. The poor officer beat a retreat, when the Albanian Bimbashi appeared on the scene. Dealing hasty blows round him, he dispersed the zaptieh and asked us what all the row was about. We soon explained, and two decent young fellows

were sent for and put at our disposal. He altogether disowned the men who were accused of stealing the horses, but the whole affair was as complete a picture of bad discipline and disorganisation as it was possible to imagine.

The reason the zaptieh were always so eager to travel with us was that they received five piastres a day each, and both they and their horses were fed. On ordinary service they had a ration of bread and corn, and were supposed to be paid a hundred piastres a month. This sum was often nearly a year in arrears, when they did get any it was paid in *caime* (paper), and the hundred piastres' nominal pay was often only equal to twenty; in some places only to six. Whilst absent with travellers their ration of bread and corn was still issued, so that they were doubly gainers.

As usual we had to make our station for angles on the summit of the ancient citadel, but though the hill was much larger than that of Homs no remains were visible, though it was plainly of artificial construction.

By the time all was settled, and we were fairly ready for starting, a good many of our acquaintances had assembled to wish us God speed, and as we rode out of the town we met our Circassian warrior, with a number of his compatriots, about to move, and hoping to find some place where they could obtain their daily bread by means more congenial than honest labour.

Our road northwards was open and nearly level, and at first near the valley of the Orontes, which is here much wider and easier of access than it is either near Rusta or lower down on its course. On the broad slopes close to the stream several big wheels like those we had seen in the town raised water to irrigate cotton and rice plantations, whilst beyond this belt stretched vast spaces, already ploughed or in course of being ploughed, in readiness for sowing wheat and barley. Under a more intelligent irrigation, and by turbine pumps and iron pipes, the ground available for the cultivation of rice and cotton might be almost

indefinitely extended, as well as the mulberry plantations for feeding silkworms, of which there are now scarcely more than enough to supply the demand of the local manufacturers. Our line of march was across the roads leading to the coast, and the only wayfarers we met were those travelling between places in the interior. Notwithstanding, we were scarcely ever ten minutes without meeting or overtaking small parties with donkeys, and occasionally a camel or two, loaded either with home produce for sale in the towns or taking back to their villages the various small articles they had bought for their own consumption.

Besides these, we met occasional bands of Circassians, with all their belongings, seeking for some place where they might find a home and subsistence, with the weary wayworn aspect of regular tramps, and a couple of parties of horsedealers, who, having collected a number of animals near Aleppo and in Northern Mesopotamia, were taking them to Damascus and Beirut for sale. None of these

horses showed any sign of good breeding, the best being a cross between the rough Kurdish pony and a low-caste Arab.

The first large village we came to was Kŏmḥân. It is a curious place, made up of conical granaries, like those at Tel el Beesy, a few square huts, many caves dug out in the soft chalk on which it is built, and one large house, the dwelling place of the Shaykh. From its roof we had a good view of the surrounding country, and a round of angles. Many people came up to see what we were doing, and all begged for a peep through my binoculars. They thought the double sextant which I used for the angles some magical instrument, and the Shaykh begged of me to compute his horoscope, and was much disappointed when he found I was unable to do it. Whilst this was going on the muezzin called to midday prayers from the roof as the most elevated point in the village. In an instant we were left alone. When prayers were over the Shaykh invited us into his house and gave us

coffee and pipes. Many of the villagers entered into conversation about the railway. One old man said he long wished to go to Baghdad, and wanted to know whether if the railway was constructed he would be able to go there for nothing. When told that he would have to pay he said he did not see much good in it, as all he would have to do now would be to load some camels with provisions for the road, mount his mare, and start. This he said would cost him nothing, and he could not understand that the railway could be cheaper though the fare would be less than the cost of the corn and other things he would have to take, as they were all his own. A large number of people were assembled round the village blacksmith, who had established himself in the courtyard of the Shaykh's house, and was repairing their ploughs in all haste. When asked why they did not have their ploughs repaired in readiness for the time when they would be required, they said that no man could be certain of living until the ploughing

season, and it was no use repairing them until they were actually wanted. This curious fatalism enters into all their relations in life, and it fully explains how it is that though the Mohammedans occupy some of the fairest and most fruitful portions of the globe, they have never, owing to the benumbing effect of their religion, advanced in civilisation, since they have ceased to be able to proselytise by fire and sword.

We pitched our camp at the next village, Tyiby, and found things in the same sort of condition as at Komhân. The Orontes was some three miles away to the west, and no water was to be obtained nearer except by purchasing from the villagers, who had a green and semi-stagnant fluid stored up in tanks cut in the chalk, to which access was obtained by a flight of steps too steep for any animal to go down and steal the precious liquid. In dry seasons these tanks often become utterly exhausted, and the greater number then leave the village with their animals, and encamp near

the river, the few who remain to guard their belongings having to fetch their daily supply on camels or mules. We got a man to go to the river for drinking-water, but not caring to tire our animals unnecessarily, we bought water for their use.

As we were without a cook I had to officiate as *chef de cuisine*, and turned out a couple of spatch-cocked fowls, some fried potatoes, and an omelette, which with some of Kopf's Erbswurst soup made, according to Schaefer and Gabriel, a better dinner than we had ever had during the time we had depended on the cook we had dismissed at Hamath.

At Tyiby we saw some very handsome greyhounds belonging to people in the village; they were rather smaller than English ones, smooth-coated, but with long silky hair on their ears, and their legs and tails slightly feathered. Their looks were much spoilt by having one of their ears cut short in order, as their masters assured us, that they might hear better.

Soon after we had started the next morning

we came upon two men with a greyhound and a match-lock, who said they had been out since before dawn looking for gazelle, but had found none, though both gazelle and hares were usually plentiful at that season. After talking to them for a few minutes we rode on, and had scarcely gone a hundred yards when we saw a gazelle trotting quietly across the road just in front of us. We galloped back and told the men, who instantly became all excitement, and came hurrying along to where we had seen the gazelle. She could not at first be made out, but by aid of my binoculars we soon discovered her lying down by a large stone. After some little discussion with the owners of the greyhound, Schaefer and I, with one of our zaptieh, agreed to ride round and circle outside the gazelle, so as to drive her down towards them, whilst they lay hid behind a small inequality in the ground. Thus we brought the gazelle to within a hundred yards of where they were hidden; but the fool of a dog would not see her, though his owners

held him up in their arms to give him a better view,—so after all our trouble we were disappointed of our chase. Except for the hope of the run, one might easily have shot the gazelle, as when we went round to drive her down to the greyhound we got within one hundred and twenty yards of her. Though disappointed we were delighted to have seen a gazelle, and became still more intent on obtaining some greyhounds for ourselves, so as to have a run on the first opportunity. The rest of our day's ride lay through country which had once been well populated, as was abundantly proved by the quantity of ruins and towers, artificial hills and caverns, which we passed. It was quite level except for one or two torrent-beds, which take the flood waters from the higher land to the east of our road down to the Orontes.

We halted at a caravanserai called Khan Shaykh Haun, which was situated at the foot of another artificial citadel hill. The modern village was mean and dirty in the extreme, and

very nearly buried in dirt and refuse. Carved capitals and columns were scattered about and applied to all sorts of menial uses. Capitals formed parts of the hand-mills with which the women ground their corn, pieces of columns lying at the mouths of wells served for the cords to run over by which the water was drawn up, and the wells, when not in use, were closed by fragments of slabs which had formed portions of some mighty temple. The Khan itself dated most probably from the time of the Crusaders or Genoese, and much of it had resisted the action both of time and man; but the modern patchwork which has been used to adapt it for a Khan compares very unfavourably with the more ancient work.

The Khan consisted of two large paved quadrangles; the entrance to the first being under an archway, on one side of which was the shop of a general dealer, and on the other the workshop of a shoeing-smith, who had his hands full the whole time we were there. On one side of the first quadrangle were some

rude Turkish baths, and on the other a *café* and tobacco-shop, and the dwelling-place of the keeper of the Khan. The whole was occupied by camels, and their drivers squatting on lines of little stools gravely smoking and drinking coffee, and occasionally taking a long stare at the Franks, who had suddenly appeared in their midst. The second was reached by another archway, and entirely surrounded by vaulted stables, where we found room to pitch our tent under shelter; a precaution we took for the benefit of our mules, as a nasty drizzly rain was falling, which would have wetted the canvas and made it much heavier.

In the archway between the two quadrangles was a curious carved stone door, with crosses and what I fancy must have been intended for shamrocks on it. This door was at the bottom of a flight of steps, and opening inwards was soon stopped by the lowest step. This, I suppose, was to prevent the staircase being "rushed" by any assailants who might have

obtained possession of the courtyards. Above the stables were some modern rooms, which served for lodging the camel-drivers and muleteers in wet weather. Outside the Khan was a large square tank built of cut stones, which is now useless, and half full of dirt and rubbish. In this village I first understood how the silting up (if one may be allowed to use the term) of the ancient cities of the East has been accomplished. No refuse or rubbish was ever carried away, and as one building was gradually lost to view by the accumulation of years, another was constructed hard by on the new level, to undergo in time the fate of its predecessor. In this manner the village had actually climbed more than half way up the side of an artificial hill which was elsewhere so steep as to be difficult to ascend, and which was over a hundred feet in height.

The keeper of the Khan had a very fine greyhound, and we sent one of the zaptieh to ask him if he would sell it. He sent back to say that no Arab could sell his dog,

but that he would give it us if we would make him a present in return. This we agreed to and the amount of the present was settled and paid. I thought there was not much difference between this and selling the dog; and so did some of his friends, for he came back after a little time, said they had been abusing him for selling the dog for money, and returned what we had given him. Perhaps he only intended to suggest that the gift might be increased. If he did, the plan failed.

Our next halting-place was Mara. The plains ended at Khan Shaykh Haun, but the ascent of the hills was so easy and gradual that no difficulty would be experienced in passing them by a railway. The quantities of ruins were simply marvellous: to support the telegraph-posts along the road-side the splintered fragments of ancient buildings were piled in heaps; the outlines of buildings could be traced by their foundations; broken sarcophagi lay about, and the massy sockets in which the stone doors used to revolve gave some idea of

the magnitude of the edifices of which they guarded the entrance. As we reached the summit of the hills between Khan Shaykh Haun and Mara we saw, away to our left, some buildings which seemed in a better state of preservation and rode off to look at them, more especially as by a quaint effect of light and shade it seemed as if there were frescoes or bas-reliefs of figures on the walls. These disappeared as we got nearer, but Khanek, as an Arab who was out hunting with two greyhounds told us the place was called, well repaid the trouble of going to see it.

The remains were most probably of the period of the decadence, not being so large and massy as the more ancient ones; the columns were slender and graceful, and in some places where the stones had been sheltered from the effects of the weather, the delicate carving of the friezes was still perfect, and the chisel-marks of the workmen almost as fresh as on the day when the stones had first been placed in their positions.

When we arrived at Mara we found it the dirtiest place we had yet seen, though it is rich and prosperous, being surrounded with vine-yards and arable ground.

A few hundred yards west of the town stand the ruins of a Genoese Castle still in good condition. We searched long for a place to pitch our tent, but the Khan was unfit for habitation, being knee-deep in the droppings of camels and mules, which the rain had converted into a steaming morass. Another part of the Khan was cleaner, but it was filled to over-flowing by Circassians, and, as we had some regard for our property, we thought it better to avoid their neighbourhood. Apparently this Khan had been built by the Saracens, and had formed part of a great fort. Large iron-studded doors still hang in the portals, and are closed every evening, presumably to guard against the Bedouins, who are reported to be bold and numerous. A story was told of a dozen of them having ridden into the Khan a short time before in broad

daylight, and driven off some mules and their loads whilst the owner stood by afraid to interfere, and the zaptieh, when appealed to, had been equally afraid to pursue. In these Khans repairs of comparatively recent date were ascribed to Ibrahim Pasha, who, whilst he ruled in these parts, seems to have effected many material improvements, though it may well be doubted whether his rule was not too despotic and arbitrary for the happiness of the inhabitants

After some marching about we found a camping-place near a well outside the town; several people tried to persuade us that it was dangerous to camp there, and one old gentleman, animated by a love of gain, told us that we could camp in his garden, which was surrounded by a wall, for a consideration. On being asked where it was, he pointed to a place about twenty yards from where we had pitched our tent, with traces of an inclosure, the remains of the wall being in some places actually eighteen inches high. We thanked him

for his care for our safety, but considered that two extra soldiers who were sent to do sentry duty during the night would be more useful than his wall. Near where we were camped were some low-caste Arabs, who, too poor to possess horses or camels, hung on the outskirts of the town to pick up a livelihood by any odd jobs. Our zaptieh, who had come from Hamath with us, found out that they had a couple of greyhounds which they would be very glad to part with, their poverty preserving them from any mock modesty about selling. We sent for the dogs to look at, and with scarcely any bargaining sold the two for forty-five piastres, not a great price. They were not quite so simple as they appeared. All through the night they kept calling out Nimshi and Schelher, the dogs' names, and in consequence they were wild to get back, and did once escape; but our zaptieh were so close on their heels that their former owners had not time to hide them.

In the morning we despatched our mules in

advance, and rode up to the serai to call on the Kaimacan, and thank him for the guard that he had given us during the night. This serai was scarcely any cleaner than the rest of the town. The reception-rooms had rickety deal divans barely covered by cushions, whose ragged chintz showed that the stuffing only consisted of a mixture of cotton and *tibn*, or chopped straw, and did not promise much for the wealth of the town. Nevertheless, excellent cigarettes and coffee were given us, and the Kaimacan and his advisers insisted that the place was prosperous, and exported 100,000 *shimuls* of wheat every year, or over 5,000 tons, besides vast quantities of raisins, the vineyards by which the town was surrounded being wonderfully productive. The trade from Mara goes partly to Latakiah, but although that port is much closer than Tripoli, a large proportion goes to the latter place, as the road is so much easier. In the rainy season the traffic with Latakiah is well-nigh suspended.

When we left, the officer commanding the

troops and all the available garrison rode out with us to see us fairly on our way. This sounds rather grand, but it was not so in reality, as the number of zaptieh in the town was only six. The rest of the eighty men, who composed the detachment under command of the Yuzbashi, or captain in charge, were dispersed among the villages in the Kaimacanlik. The two men who had been sent to act as our guard during the night were stationed at the gates of the serai to present arms as we arrived and departed, so that our guard of honour only consisted of the officer and the other four. I suppose they were sent with us as a delicate attention, not to see that we did not take anything valuable, for there seemed to be nothing worth taking.

CHAPTER XI.

Dirt and misery—The Shaykh's house—Turkish infantry—The main body—Mounted officers—A thick fog—Idlib—Zurby—Arab women—Black mail—Mortal agony—A stampede—Tortoises—Khan Touman—Two routes—Turkeys and Bustards—Aleppo—Mr. Thabet—Izzet Pasha—Mr. Henderson—Schaefer ill—Beræa—A famous emporium—Many vicissitudes—John—Damas—Such dogs—A living column—The surprise—Lost and won—John Zimisces—Fratricidal strife—Timour Leng—Rival claims—Value of Aleppo—Fire and sword.

We soon got rid of our escort, the dignity of which was not enhanced by the foal of the mare the officer was riding following its dam in spite of her rider's efforts.

For some miles our path led through more ruins and remains of cities, some of which were comparatively modern. The only habitations to be seen were clusters of mud huts

where the cultivators of the ground huddled together in dirt and misery.

We gradually rose to a higher level, and the country became more cheerful. Several villages and small towns, with groves of trees and gardens, mingling with the vestiges of the ancients.

At one of these villages Schaefer and I dismounted and went into the Shaykh's house to see if we could get something to eat, as the village we were to camp at was still some distance off and we had let the mules and baggage get far in front whilst we had been shooting. A pile of large earthen beehives promised well for some honey. The promise was not belied, as we got lentil soup, bread, honey, and coffee, and a feed of barley for our horses. In one corner of the house was a carved stone door, similar to the one at Khan Shaykh Haun, but smaller, and like it also at the foot of a staircase. When we left we made a present to the coffee-maker and two of the Shaykh's children, and putting our

horses into a canter we arrived at Sarmeen about sunset. We found our mules unloaded, and our tent pitched, and were not sorry to take shelter under it, as the night air was cold and piercing. Soon after we arrived we heard the trumpets of a regiment of Turkish infantry who were on the march from Aleppo to Damascus.

Next morning their *réveillé* roused us at five o'clock, and by six the first portion, consisting of invalids and baggage on mules with a small escort, passed by our tent. It was a miserable morning for the poor fellows, as there was a thick, cold, wet fog. Soon after these had passed we heard the trumpets playing a quick-step. Emerging from the mist there appeared the main body of the regiment, nearly a thousand strong, with only six officers. The rank and file were composed of all sorts of men, from the veterans who had stood the brunt of the war, clothed in ragged and tattered uniforms, and in many cases shoeless, to the conscripts lately torn from

their homes and still dressed in their native costumes. They marched with a swing and at a pace that it would puzzle many an English regiment to keep up. The officers were as motley a crew as their men, one or two of the more fortunate wearing Russian knee-boots which they had picked up in the war, others almost as badly shod as the privates. Varieties of head-dresses and coats were as numerous as possible among so few, and only three of the six had swords.

Two hours afterwards three mounted officers, wrapped up in fur coats, with their private baggage on mules and an escort on foot, passed by. They had delayed their start till the first rawness of the morning had passed and they had had a comfortable breakfast. This selfishness of the superior officers in the Turkish army has caused many of the disasters in the Russo-Turkish wars, as they utterly neglected their men's well-being, and cared for nothing else as long as they were comfortable themselves.

The fog was so thick all day that it was useless for us to think of starting. We had to resign ourselves to a day's delay, and our tempers were not improved by being told that these fogs often lasted three or four days. We employed ourselves as well as we could, and I plotted up the triangulation till close to Homs.

Next day, notwithstanding the prophecies of the villagers, the weather was bright and clear, and we were able to resume our journey.

Four miles from Sarmeen is the large and prosperous town of Idlib, surrounded with large woods and groves of olives, with a population of over twenty thousand inhabitants, and carrying on a very considerable trade with Latakiah and Alexandretta.

The country across which we marched was level, a break in the hills not shown in any map conducting us from the fertile plateau on which Idlib and Sarmeen are situated, to another plain, where we halted for the night at an Arab village called Zurby.

Here the only water obtainable was that in

a deep well. The women harness themselves to a long rope, walk away with it, and so haul up the bucket containing the water. The shaykh told us we must pay for it; but the women, thinking that their domain was being invaded, drove him away and volunteered, for some coffee and sugar, to supply us with all the water we wanted. They were not bad-looking, though much disfigured by the hideous Arab custom of staining the lower lip blue. They crowded, laughing and talking, into our tent, and were very inquisitive about all our belongings; but, although apparently much amused by what they saw, they were civil and amenable.

In the morning we sent one of our zaptieh on in front to Aleppo to announce our arrival to the Consul there, but we ourselves had to wait for some time before starting, owing to a mist which obscured all the distant points. Our fair visitors of the previous evening had first to go and weep in company at the graveyard near the tomb of the father of the Shaykh who had

lately died. When that was over they again crowded round us as cheerful and frolicsome as if the thought of death had never entered into their heads.

Just as we were starting, the shaykh of another village rode up and pressed us to pay him a visit. When we refused, he accompanied us for some distance on our way. He bitterly complained of the government of Aleppo for not protecting them against the Bedouins. According to his story the Bedouins originally used to levy black mail from these villages, and in return prevented the Turks from extorting taxes. Some ten years before the Turks had organised a corps of riflemen mounted on mules, who had kept back the Bedouins. Since that time the taxes had been regularly levied, until during the war, when the Turkish government, in its mortal agony requiring every available soldier, had sent the men composing this corps against the Russians. The Bedouins were not long in availing themselves of the opportunity, and made the

unfortunate villagers pay up all the arrears for the time they had been protected by the Turks. Whilst doing so, they refused to interfere with the tax-gatherers, so that the unfortunate peasantry have also had to pay the heavy war taxes, and are in a far worse plight than ever before.

Soon after he left us we came to a small stream known under various names. Where we struck it, it is called the Halep, from having passed through the city of Aleppo. Coming down the slope towards the stream our mules stampeded, and in less than three minutes half of them had capsized through their loads shifting, and were lying on their backs with their legs in the air. A most comical sight, and, as I told Schaefer, a most reassuring one, for if ever the Arabs attacked us, and the mules got frightened and attempted to bolt, they would soon be brought to the ground by their loads shifting, and be unable to scatter far, so that all our energies could be devoted to our assailants. Close by the river were some

flocks of Kettah (*Pterocles alchata*) of which we got seven for four shots, rather by pot-hunting tactics. We got off our horses and stalked them. When they were just on the point of rising we fired our first barrels simultaneously, and then our second barrels independently, as they were on the wing. In the river were small tortoises, some of which ventured out on the banks, and made very good targets for revolver practice, though in several shots we only bagged two, which were pounced upon by our servants as very good eating. I never before thought that a tortoise could take a header; but the way one or two threw themselves off projecting portions of the bank when a bullet struck close by them convinced me of my error.

The proper line for a railway to Aleppo from the south, would be up the valley of this stream, but at Khan Touman[1] the present track strikes over rocky hills, and in winter, when

[1] Khan Touman is so called after Touman Bey, who was the last of the Sultans of the Mamelukes. He was

snow is on the ground, is often almost impassable. At the same season the lower route is so muddy as to be dangerous for camels, and often traffic between Aleppo and the south is well nigh impossible for weeks at a time. On these hills we saw some flocks of bustards, of which there are three sorts,—the large, the small, and the medium sized. Those we saw were the medium sized ones, and though we tried stalking them for a long time, we could not get within rifle range.

elected on the death of the aged Sultan Ghawri, just after Selim the First had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mamelukes.

With desperate valour and chivalrous courage he long struggled against the overwhelming forces of the Turks. Fortune, however, declared herself against him, and at last, after having lost his bravest followers and being deserted by others, he was betrayed into the hands of Selim.

For some time Selim treated him with respect, but the quondam subjects of Touman, Ghazali and Khair Bey, who had contributed to his fall by treachery, could not bear to have a living memento of their crime always before their eyes, and persuaded Selim to put him to death by feigning that a plot was on foot to liberate him and restore him to power. Thus perished Touman Bey, the brave, the chivalrous, and the just, the last of the Mameluke Sultans, on the 17th day of April, 1517.

A propos of these bustards, Mr. Grattan Geary, in his clever book, *Bombay to the Bosphorus*, makes a curious mistake. He says that the idea that turkeys first came from America must be now abandoned, as he had met a Dutch gentleman who had often hawked them. Mr. Geary's informant must have meant the large bustard (*Otis tarda*) which may easily be mistaken at a distance for a turkey, and I have often seen the cock birds strutting about like turkey cocks. Dallas's description is singularly just and apt:—"During the breeding season the males are seen in fine days displaying themselves like turkey cocks, spreading their tails, drooping their wings, and dilating their throats."

Although the bustards are sometimes classed in the order of waders, their proper place would seem to be amongst the *cursores*, near their relations, the turkeys. Indeed, very likely the name of turkey was given to the American bird from its great resemblance to its Asiatic cousin.

On arriving on the summit of these hills, we saw a single tall tower, which, standing on the top of the citadel, is the first point in Aleppo seen by wayfarers, from whatever point they may be journeying. As we advanced, the whole of the town became visible, with its numerous domes and minarets, surrounded by groves and gardens, the whole commanded by the citadel on one side, and on the other by the magnificent barracks built by Ibrahim Pasha, which are capable of containing ten thousand men.

As we descended towards the town, we were met by Mr. Thabet, first dragoman to the English consulate, who had been sent out to meet us by Mr. Henderson, the consul. Mr. Henderson would have come himself, but the town was in great excitement owing to the arrival of Izzet Pasha, who had been appointed to the command of the troops intended to put down the Kurdish insurrection, and whom Mr. Henderson and the rest of the consular body had gone to welcome.

Mr. Thabet gave us good accounts of the progress of the Afghan war, about which we were naturally anxious, having heard nothing authentic since the news of the declaration of war. Owing to the arrival of Izzet Pasha, and the consequent crowding of the narrow streets by those who had flocked to meet him, we had to skirt round outside the gardens and town to arrive at the consulate.

Once there, we were welcomed by Mr. Henderson, who insisted on our taking up our quarters with him at the consulate, which is established in a large building rented from one of the ecclesiastical dignitaries who, owing to the number of denominations, abound at Aleppo. Besides the comfort of once more speaking to a compatriot, we were delighted to find a large batch of letters from home.

At first we only intended to stay at Aleppo to hire a fresh lot of mules and muleteers, our Zahlich friends being only engaged thus far. Schaefer however became seriously unwell and was soon confined to his bed with an acute

attack of gastritis. I was also bad for a few days with ophthalmia. Luckily a very clever German doctor, Bischoff by name, the one who attended on the consul, soon put me right, and in a few days he was able to say that Schaefer was in no danger, though his recovery was likely to be tedious. I spent a short time in looking about the town, and visiting the citadel and the other lions of the place.

Aleppo is a very ancient city, but its name is comparatively modern, the ancient name of the present city having been Beræa, Chalybo (or Halybo), from which most probably the present name is derived, having been the name of Kinasrm, about ten miles to the south. The Mohammedans assert that the name of Haleb or Halep only dates from the days of Mahomet, who visited the town when a camel-driver. They derive it either from a marvellous white mare which he rode, or else from an equally marvellous cow, who shed her milk all the time she was being driven round the town.

At whatever time the name was given the town has long been a famous emporium of trade, and the traditions and signs of her former opulence and prosperity are still evident, though the opening of the Suez canal has dealt a heavy blow to her fortunes.

In A.D. 363, Julian, the apostate, on passing by Beræa, was much annoyed at the cold reception he met with from the senate, who were almost exclusively Christian.

Since that day Aleppo has passed through many vicissitudes. At the time of the conquest of Syria by the Saracens the citadel was deemed impregnable, and was defended by Youkenna, who was considered one of the bravest and most able generals of the Christian emperor Heraclius. He killed his brother John, a religious monk, who, with the townspeople, attempted to make terms with the Arabs, for being a traitor; and for a long time maintained a successful defence, greatly harassing the Arabs by numerous and daring sorties. The Arabs were about to give up the siege

in despair after having been badly worsted in an engagement, when a man called Damas, who had been a slave, promised to attempt a surprise. Khaled, the second in command, had heard great things of the feats performed by Damas in Arabia, and prevailed upon his more cautious commander to give him his opportunity. The Arabs apparently retired, leaving Damas and thirty companions in ambush. In the evening Damas sallied out by himself and took six of the Aleppo people prisoners in succession. He killed the first five for being such dogs as not to understand Arabic, but from the sixth he succeeded in extracting some information. After dark he prowled around the citadel, covered with a goat-skin, and imitating the noises of a dog so as to avert suspicion, until he found the most accessible place.

He then went back to his companions and brought them to the spot he had chosen. He sat on the ground, a man sat on his shoulders, another on his, and so on; the topmost man then stood up, then the next, and, when all

the others were upright, Damas, who was a man of gigantic stature and strength, stood up also, and the summit of the living column was enabled to seize the edge of the parapet and draw himself up. He then let down his turban and managed to draw up his companions, who were speedily joined by the remainder of the thirty.

Lulled to a false sense of security by the apparent retreat of the Arabs, the garrison were indulging in drinking and feasting, a careless guard was kept, and the few sentinels who were at their posts were killed ere they had time to give the alarm. Meanwhile Damas and his band crept stealthily towards the gates, pausing on the way to look in, through a window veiled by tapestry, on Youkenna and his officers, who, dressed in gorgeous robes, were engaged in riotous revelry.

Fearing to alarm the garrison before he had secured the gates, he left the tempting prey in peace, and made his way to the entrance, where he surprised the guard, threw open the

doors, lowered the drawbridge, and admitted Khaled and a band of chosen horsemen, who, according to arrangement, had just arrived before the citadel. The horsemen galloped into the centre, and the citadel of Aleppo was lost and won, almost ere those to whose keeping it had been entrusted knew that it was attacked.

Youkenna was one of the first who made the profession of the Mohammedan faith, and his example was speedily followed by the greater part of the garrison.

Aleppo was again taken by the Christians under John Zimisces in (*circa*) A.D. 970. Seifeddowlat, of the dynasty of Hamadan, ingloriously retreated without striking a blow in defence of his kingdom or capital. Though deserted by their natural chief, the garrison of Aleppo held out bravely for a time, but they were not able to prevent the Christians from sacking the palace of their fugitive king which stood without the walls. The invaders were rewarded by a spoil of three hundred bags of

gold and above a thousand mules. This rich prize was a fresh incentive to persevere in the siege, and they were at last rewarded by being able to carry the city by storm, the walls being deserted whilst the soldiers and civilians were engaged in fatal and fratricidal strife. Most of the people of Aleppo paid for their folly with their lives, and ten thousand were carried into captivity. The return of the Christians to power was only transient, and they soon abandoned their conquests to the Arabs. Since that time the Crescent has reigned supreme over Aleppo.

Timour Leng (Timour with the iron leg) or Tamerlane, the founder of the Mogul empire, took Aleppo in A.D. 1400. Trusting in their numbers and the discipline of their troops, the Syrian emirs ventured to resist the enormous army of the great conqueror in the open, but through the cowardice of some, and the treachery of others of their number, they were easily overthrown. The same reason which led to the defeat of their

army in the field caused the surrender of the citadel.

Anxious to appear as learned as he was brave, Timour caused the doctors of Aleppo to dispute with him on the rival claims of Ali and Moawiyah. Between disputants as unequally matched as the tyrant conqueror and his trembling captives, the result could not long be in doubt.

Owing to the loss of numbers of his men in the conquest of Aleppo and Damascus Timour was not able to maintain his hold on these places, but ere retiring to the east he completed the destruction of Aleppo by committing it to the flames.

Ibrahim Pasha well knew the value of Aleppo, and the barracks which he built there are said to stand on the very spot where the camp of the soldiers of Zimisces was pitched during their siege of the town, and also a very fine military hospital. These buildings remain to attest his power, but the former is far too large for the shrunken

garrison, and the latter is tenanted by some of the Circâssians expelled from Bulgaria.

The last time that fire and sword reigned in Aleppo was soon after the departure of the Egyptians, when the Arabs of the desert made friends with some of the more fanatical of the inhabitants. Many Jews and Christians lost their lives, and, for ten days before the revolt was put down, the remainder did not know that those who witnessed the rising of the sun would live to see him set.

A noteworthy fact in the history of Aleppo is that Doctor Pocock, the father of modern Orientalists, there acquired his marvellous knowledge of Arabic.

CHAPTER XII.

The citadel—Wreck and desolation—A capital view—Two plans—Zeyteyn or Karchemish—Leave for Jerablus—Bab—A club-room—A curious prison—Its inmates—Their crimes—The yuzbashi's horses—A bargain—Vineyards and gardens—Primitive wheels—Trial of speed—A sick headman—A sumptuous meal—Mohammed Pasha—A cordial welcome—A contrast—Politics—Mohammed's wives—Supper—Impartial mixture—A kind neighbour—Bed-fellows—Coursing—Hospitality and its opposite—Herd of gazelle—Racing speed—Nimshi tired—Forget my revolver—Bag a gazelle—Sultan—Fifty or five hundred.

ONE of my first visits at Aleppo was to the citadel; its outside has still an air of venerable respectability, and the bridge and gateway, which are attributed to Genoese architects, are very fine indeed, though the effects of earthquakes are to be seen in the cracks which seam the façade. The winding and steepness of the

passage into the interior, the numerous heavy, iron-studded doors and portcullises which hang at each turning, the loop-holes and embrasures which command every portion, combined with the darkness of the whole, render such an exploit as that of Khaled charging up at the head of his wild horsemen from the desert to appear more like a myth than a sober page of history, the more so as it must have been quite impossible for Damas and his thirty companions to have surprised all the guards, or even if they had, to have occupied all the points of vantage.

Inside, all is a scene of wreck and desolation. A powder magazine shows some signs of having been lately repaired, but everything else seems to be going to rack and ruin. A few old field-pieces with rotten carriages are mounted round the walls, and some more ancient pieces of ordnance composed of bars and rings, a few with the arms of Austria on them to recall the days when the Turk was a real power in the world, lie mouldering away among the débris of the ruined buildings.

The garrison was on a par with their habitation; all the men were habited in the most torn and tattered of uniforms, and the few sentries that were posted about were armed with old Queen Anne muskets, though the troops in Ibrahim Pasha's new barracks were smartly clothed and armed with the Peabody rifle. It seemed as if the men in the citadel were hidden away among the ruins because the Governor and the General were ashamed that they should be seen in public in their dilapidated clothes and with their ancient arms.

From the high tower, which had been the first point we had seen on nearing Aleppo, a capital view of the surrounding country could be obtained, and an idea formed of the system of hills which almost encircle the town. The town, too, lay at one's feet, so that one had a perfect bird's eye view of the numerous mosques and their courtyards, and could form some estimate of the numbers of khans which are used by the camel-drivers and muleteers who conduct the traffic of the place.

Finding that Schaefer's illness promised to be tedious, though not dangerous, I began to look about for something to do in order to occupy the time until he should again be able to travel. Two plans were proposed by Henderson; one that I should accompany him to Zeyteyn, where Khamil Pasha, the Wali of Aleppo, had been distinguishing himself by the unnecessary severity of his punishment of a revolt of the Christians, and where the ambassador had ordered him to proceed to investigate the case; the other being that I should go to Jerablus on the Euphrates in order to commence excavations there for the British Museum, it having been identified by Mr. Smith when passing by as the site of Karchemish.

After some little discussion of the two plans it was decided that I should go to Jerablus and see what could be done there. Preparations were soon made, and the same day that Henderson started for Zeyteyn I left for Jerablus, taking my two horses, the groom, and a servant, and accompanied by Raschid, a native of

Baghdad, who had been before employed by Mr. Rassam to take charge of the workmen in some of his excavations, and who had been sent to Henderson for the same purpose.

As I expected to find hospitality *en route*, I took no tent. The first day out we halted at Bab, a small town about eighteen miles from Aleppo. I had been furnished with letters to the cadi and kaimacan, but both were absent, and for some time I could not find any one to provide lodging for myself or my animals. At the serai the yuzbashi in charge of the police at last appeared, and then he sent for the head of the mejliss. I was taken up into a small room surrounded by a divan where I was told I could make myself at home. This turned out to be a sort of club-room, and all the evening was full of people smoking and drinking coffee, with whom I had to attempt to make conversation, but I am afraid that as I misunderstood much that they said, the same fate must have attended my questions and answers.

At the serai there was a place of detention for prisoners which certainly seemed the most peculiar thing of the sort I had ever seen. The lower part of the building was formed of large arches, and one of these was closed at the far end by a wall and in front by a massive wooden grating. In this place, which much resembled a railway arch, were huddled together prisoners of all ages and religions; some in chains and some free, some sleeping and some awake, some laughing and some weeping.

Those who could buy, or had friends who would give them supplies, were well off for tobacco and food, others were almost starved. The more prosperous-looking inmates conversed freely with their friends and with the sentries who stood opposite their cage with loaded muskets ready to fire on any sign of a disturbance.

The crimes were as various as the inmates; stabbing, stealing, non-payment of debt and taxes, desertion and other offences were

mentioned to me. A more scandalous exhibition it was scarce possible to conceive, if it were not that my eyes and ears were becoming accustomed to what occurs under the Turkish rule. There was no active cruelty intended in huddling these people together in this den; they had to be imprisoned somewhere, and this was the only place where they could be put; the way they were looked after was only another instance of that same apathy which permits a broken down animal to die by the wayside instead of putting it out of its misery.

In the next arch were two horses, the property of the yuzbashi of zaptieh, and they were cared for much more than their human neighbours. One of these, a handsome dark bay with black points, took my fancy very much, and I prevailed upon the groom in charge to bring him out for me to look at. He seemed full of spirit and as if he were possessed of great speed, but regarding him as unattainable after having had a good look at him, I went back to the club-room,

where I had my supper and turned in on the cushions of the divan.

Next morning I was up betimes, but early as it was, many people were in the room for their morning smoke and coffee as soon as I was on the move. Among them was the yuzbashi, and he proposed to sell me his horse, asking however sixty liras for it, a price which I did not feel disposed to give. At last after a great deal of bargaining, and just as we were starting, he agreed to let me have him for fourteen liras and the horse I had bought at Tripoli, one of the town councillors making us shake hands on the bargain.

Daher, who was riding the Tripoli horse soon changed his saddle, and we started. Our way at first lay amongst vineyards and gardens, with small streams running through them which often tunnelled channels for themselves in the soft limestone rock. About an hour after leaving Bab we came to another village, which was dependent on its wells for water. These were very deep, and rude and

primitive wheels worked by horses or mules are used to raise the water to the surface. Beyond this village we came to an open plain, and had an opportunity of trying the paces of the new horse, who did not belie his promise of speed. Daher riding in a Turkish saddle, and with a Turkish bit, was able to get away from me on the Count, so that I was sure that when I rode him myself I should find him very much faster. Soon after this we crossed a low narrow ridge of limestone, just large enough to mark the demarcation between the plain we had left and the one we had entered upon. We soon came upon a sort of half village, half camp; and as the mules were a long way behind went into the house of the headman to ask for a cup of coffee. We found him suffering from indigestion, and he asked eagerly if we could give him any medicine for it; I promised if he would send on a man to the place where we were to sleep, I would give him something when my baggage arrived. Being satisfied on his own

part, he now brought up two little boys, his sons, who were suffering from frightful scrofulous sores on their heads, to see if I could also promise any relief for them. When he heard I could give them something to dress their heads with, and also medicine to strengthen them, his delight knew no bounds, and he insisted on preparing a sumptuous meal for us, and feeding our horses. Besides coffee, he gave us tea, which he said came from the Muscovs, and which was made in a Russian samovar, which had somehow or other found its way into his hands.

When we left he sent half a dozen of his men, mounted on their best mares, to escort us to Mohammed Pasha's, where we were to pass the night. Mohammed Pasha is not a Pasha at all, the Pasha which is affixed to his personal name being simply the corruption of a family name, and his brother Moustapha, who lives some little way from him is also called a Pasha. "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell

as sweet," is not true here, for this accidental name of Pasha has given a great deal of influence to the two brothers, who are of mixed Kurdish and Arab blood. They both have the reputation of being great robbers, and often go on ghazous (or plundering excursions) against their weaker neighbours, but nevertheless are hospitable and generous in the extreme.

Mohammed's welcome of our party was cordial; his house and stables were at once placed at our disposal, and orders given to prepare a feast for the evening. His house was simply a couple of rooms, with flat roofs, and walls of rough stones, with the interstices plastered up with mud. The rooms were long and narrow owing to the difficulty of finding timber for rafters. The door was in the centre of the length, and the front room was there divided by a dwarf wall; along each side of the half which formed the reception hall, the mud floor was raised about four or five inches above the level of the ground.

These raised portions formed the divans; when we entered there was only one small mat spread out, but Mohammed and his wife called out for children and servants, and these divans were soon covered with carpets, quilts, silken cushions, and embroidered camel furniture. The contrast between the rude hut with its smoke-blackened rafters and their pendent cobwebs, and the beautiful carpets and luxurious cushions was great indeed.

The news of a European visitor soon spread round about, and all whose age or position entitled them to do so gathered in the hut to gossip and stare. The conversation as usual hinged on the war, and on what England was going to do for Turkey. It was often very difficult to evade the searching home questions put by these shrewd people, as to why we did not assist Turkey before, and declare war with Russia. The best way I found to turn their attention from the war was to talk about the hopes of reforms in the government, and the railroad. They all

seemed anxious to have a railroad or some better means of communication with the outer world than they then possessed. Mohammed's elder wife, for he had two, took part in all the discussions, sitting down amongst us and smoking her pipe, and altogether taking a very different part from that usually ascribed to Eastern women. The second wife, owing to her having had no children, was only looked upon as a sort of servant, and had to help to prepare the evening meal. She begged of me to give her medicine or write her a charm which would take away the reproach of barrenness from her, and was much disappointed when I professed my inability to comply with her request.

When the food was ready, a carpet was spread out, and in the centre was placed a huge platter on which was a pile of rice deluged with ghee, surmounted by a boiled sheep, chopped up into little pieces without any regard to joints, or proportions of fat, lean, and gristle. This platter was surrounded

by small bowls full of lentil soup, one to every two or three persons, and plates, on each of which was a dismembered fried fowl. Huge piles of Arab bread, which also served as napkins, completed the set out. Wooden spoons were supplied to eat the soup with, but when I produced a knife and fork for my own use, I was overruled by the united voice of the company, and had to join in with my fingers.

The way in which the pile melted away before the joint attack of a dozen hungry men was marvellous; a sort of second course of stewed figs and honey was brought in soon after we began, and figs, mutton, honey, rice, fowls, and soup were impartially mixed together by the company.

When appetites were appeased each washed his fingers and made way for others who were waiting. An old gentleman who sat on my right was much put out that I did not eat as fast as the rest; and kept on selecting what he considered choice morsels, and putting them in

my mouth, sometimes making up a ball of rice and ghee, dipping it in the honey and administering it whether I would or not, and then following up the attack with a fragment of mutton or chicken, or a spoonful of soup. The menkind having finished, the dishes were taken away, and the carpet lifted up with all the fragments in it, and spread out again in the women's quarters, where they and the children made their meal off the remains.

Coffee, tobacco, and yarns, were then the order of the day, or rather of the night, for some little time, the people not belonging to the household soon leaving. Mohammed about nine o'clock proposed bed as a good idea, and he and his wife were much amused at the production of my sleeping-sack and my getting inside it. The women went into the inner room, but all the rest picked out any place their fancy dictated to them, and Nimshi, my greyhound, who had a peculiar faculty for making herself comfortable, coiled up alongside me with her head on my pillow. Soon

we were all asleep; towards the middle of the night I was awoke by a rather heavy weight on my chest and found that an old sheep had come in by the half open door, turned Nimshi out of her berth, and established itself in her place. I turned the creature out, but the door fastenings not being good it made its way in again and again, and it at last being content to use only my feet as a pillow I was fain to let it stop.

In the morning we got up and shook ourselves and soon were ready for the road, but Mohammed would not hear of our starting before we had some breakfast, which consisted of hot lentil soup with onions in it, and eggs broken into boiling ghee. The morning being cold and frosty, this was a very welcome preparation for our ride.

I mounted my new horse to-day, and taking Daher the zaptieh (Haji Mohammed) and my greyhound, went away from the road to look for hares which were reported to be numerous. Before we had gone a mile one started up close

under my horse's feet, but though we had a very good run we did not catch pussy, as when Nimshi was close upon her she lay down in a sort of small grip and the dog overran her, and before I could call Nimshi back the hare was away and lost to sight. Better luck attended two other runs, and I had very good reason to be pleased with both my dog and my horse, as it is very rare indeed for a greyhound to be able to catch a hare single-handed, and I found that the horse carried me easily and well so that I could always keep close up and easily leave Mohammed and Daher far behind.

After the last hare was killed we came to a stream which we had to cross and on the banks of which was a village; here we waited for Raschid and the mules, and though we got off our horses and entered into conversation with some of the people, they, contrary to what we usually found, seemed uncivil and surly and did not offer us any hospitality. A short way further on, however, as we were passing

by another village where the people said they were pure Arabs, the Shaykh came out and insisted on my going into his tent, or house, for it partook of the nature of both, and drinking coffee with him. He and his friends in return punished my tobacco, which they said was better than any they could get without sending to Aleppo for it.

They congratulated me on my luck in getting two hares, but said it was a pity I had tired Nimshi out after *arnib* (hares) as gazelle were to be found close by and we should most likely see some when we went on again. The Shaykh rode on a short distance with me to point out where he had seen some, and the probable direction in which they had gone; he had hardly left me ten minutes before we saw a small herd of six or seven feeding about a mile off. I went and fetched Nimshi, who had been contentedly following the mules and looking at the two hares she had killed, and then by careful stalking managed to get within sixty or seventy yards of the gazelle before they

saw me. What the Shaykh had said was quite true, and Nimshi was so tired that she could not gain an inch. Feeling that my horse was going well within himself I determined to try and ride past and turn them, so calling upon him for a struggle he answered nobly, and we flew along over the broken ground at regular racing speed and I was soon going neck and neck with the buck who was leading; an extra dig of the spurs and a lift with the reins and I passed them, then turning sharp across headed them back in the right direction. Unfortunately Daher and Mohammed who were between me and Nimshi rode straight at the gazelle—which I had let get a small distance in front of me in order to save my horse—and turned them off. There was now no hope of doing anything with Nimshi, so I determined to try and ride up alongside of them again and see if I could knock one over with my Winchester.

Notwithstanding the work he had already done my horse was able to collar them once more,

and we were soon racing alongside them; at the speed we were going I could not manage to unsling my rifle, the buckle having twisted, and I quite forgot my revolver was ready in my belt; for nearly ten minutes did my horse race alongside the gazelle, and only a few yards from them, without any aid from the reins. We were getting into such bad ground at the end of this time that I was forced to attend to where we were going, and only just in time, as the gazelle turned into a deep ravine where it was impossible for me to follow with the horse, so I had to pull up.

I got off to let my horse have a blow, and looked round to see where the gazelle were; they seemed to have disappeared into the bowels of the earth. I looked to the buckle of my Winchester to see what the matter was, and had just got it clear, when, looking up, I saw the buck gazelle standing on a rock about two hundred and twenty yards off. To adjust my sight and drop on my knee was done without thought; cocking the rifle caused him

to start, but before he went off I had time to get a steady aim and fire; judge of my delight when I saw him give two convulsive bounds and fall dead. I had hardly thought that the Winchester was true enough for such a shot—and of course it was somewhat of a fluke to kill him dead.

I was alone now, Daher and Mohammed having been left far behind, and the mules being more than three miles away. After a little I found a way across the ravine to where the buck lay, and deferring grallochíng till I got to camp, I managed to strap him on behind my saddle, and remounting, rode back to the mules, where the carcase was transferred to one of them.

I had not hitherto given my new horse a name; but Haji Mohammed telling me when we met again that he was a Sultan among horses if he could pass a gazelle, I decided upon calling him Sultan, and Sultan he was named accordingly.

We soon afterwards saw either the same

herd of gazelle or another; but I thought it was best after the work Sultan had done not to give him another gallop, although he seemed quite fresh and lively, and ready to go on again. We now began to descend by a winding pass through the hills which fringe the plain bordering the Euphrates, and where were many old quarries from which the stones used in the construction of Karchemish, Hierapolis, and many another ancient city had probably been obtained.

Just at dusk we came upon the plain, and a quarter of an hour's canter brought us to the village of Jerablus, which lies about two miles to the southward of the ruins and close to the river's bank. I had letters to the Shaykh, Hosayn by name, and he placed a hut at my disposal for my horses and myself, and though apparently rather avaricious seemed inclined to be hospitable according to his lights.

I told Raschid to make arrangements about engaging men, and Shaykh Hosayn assured me that as no agricultural work was going on I

could get as many as I wanted were the number required fifty or five hundred, so after an exciting day and a good supper, provided by the Shaykh, I was very glad to spread out my sleeping bag and get inside, there to dream of countless gazelle and marvellous gallops.

CHAPTER XIII.

Karchemish—Stronghold of the Hittites—Nebuchadnezzar—Josiah—Engage workmen—Snipe and duck—Massive stone wall—The ruins—Roman town—Symbols—Mexican alphabet—Roman gateway—Roman bath—Slab of basalt—Large bas-reliefs—An old Vandal—A cuneiform brick—Broken pottery—A clean sweep—Wild boar—Is it gold?—Solomon and Abraham—A look out—*Khansir, Khansir!*—Off at a rush—Hard galloping—Very groggy—A respectful distance—Pluck and fury—*Coup de grâce*—Control their disgust—Another pig—Through the ruins—Hidden in the gully—Safe and sound—Shaykh Mohammed—Obliging people—A wounded man—A respectful distance—Drowned—Nurse the baby—Circassians—Good chases—Rocks and swamps—Galloping after pig.

KARCHEMISH, the latest supposed and most probable site of which was to be the scene of our digging, is scarce known to the moderns even by name, or only as appearing in the pages of Holy Writ. Before the days of

Mr. Smith's visit it had, from its first location at Circesium at the junction of the Khabour with the Euphrates, been moved by more profound antiquaries to Hierapolis or Mombedj (Mabog), about twenty miles south of the ruins we were to examine, and some six or seven miles from the Euphrates.

Karchemish, however, from all that we hear of it in history and in the Bible, must most probably have been immediately on the banks of the river, and the ruins near Jerablus being so placed it is most probable that, independently of Mr. Smith's testimony, they are actually the true Karchemish.

Karchemish is first mentioned in the time of Tiglath-Pileser as being the frontier town and chief stronghold of the Hittites. We next find it taken by Asshur-izir-pal in his ninth campaign, when, crossing the Euphrates on rafts, he entered the city, and received the submission and homage of the Hittite prince, Sangara, and also of the surrounding chiefs.

In (circa) 608 B.C. the great Egyptian

monarch, Neco, after having defeated Josiah, King of Judah, near Megiddo, attacked and took Karchemish, which was looked upon as guarding the ordinary passage of the river Euphrates. He was able to hold his conquests for three years, at the end of which time Nabopolassar entrusted the command of an army to Nebuchadnezzar, his son, who, considering Karchemish as the key of the whole country, marched directly upon it, and utterly defeated the hosts of Neco, who were marshalled for its defence.

Karchemish once fallen, Nebuchadnezzar found no further difficulty in his way, and would no doubt have completed the conquest of Egypt if he had not been forced to return to Babylon by the news of the death of his father, Nabopolassar.

Karchemish is mentioned by name in the Bible in the Second Book of Chronicles, chap. xxxv. ver. 20—"After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by

Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him;" and also in Jeremiah, chap. xlvi. ver. 2—"Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-Necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah."

Mr. Smith, passing by on his way between Aleppo and Bir-ed-jik, heard of some sculptured stones and came to look at them, and found one covered with inscriptions in a character much less advanced than the cuneiform, and to which as yet no key has been found. That the ancient Karchemish was on the right bank of the river was evident from the fact that both Asshur-izir-pal and Nebuchadnezzar had to cross the river to attack it, and that it was close to the river bank is shown on a bas-relief representing its capture by the latter monarch.

In the morning I found Raschid surrounded by a mob of men clamouring to be engaged,

who had come in from neighbouring villages eager to be employed for certain pay. After a little trouble we selected those we wanted, at rates of pay varying from five piastres a day for the men who used picks, down to three piastres for those who carried the loose earth away in baskets. We had brought implements with us from Aleppo, and as soon as the men were engaged I told Raschid to serve them out, and started to walk to the ruins by myself to pick out the place to commence operations, and also in hopes of getting a shot at a snipe or a duck whilst passing by some cultivated ground which was flooded by a small stream flowing down from the hills into the Euphrates.

I got away unobserved, and, following the river bank, reached the place I had marked out for my shooting, and was soon pretty well into the mud and water after some snipe and duck, of which there were immense quantities. I got first a duck and then a couple of snipe; but the noise of my firing brought

up a lot of boys and men, who began shouting and yelling to tell me where the birds were, and in their desire to serve me effectually prevented my getting within range of another bird. Luckily when I left the muddy and swampy part they thought I was giving up shooting, and I bagged another snipe and a couple of pigeons as I was walking along.

Shortly before arriving at the ruins the river was embanked by a massive stone wall; but whether it was of the date of the Hittite city of Karchemish, or belonged to a more recent Roman town, which had since occupied the site, I am unable to say.

The ruins themselves are of an irregular oval form, rather more than half a mile in length, and a quarter in width, and with the major axis in a north and south direction. On east, south, and west they are inclosed by a mound which is much higher on the river side than elsewhere, and to the north by a sort of gully down which flows a rapid stream which drives a mill, the property of Shaykh Hosayn. The whole of

the interior is overspread with the ruins of the Roman town, and the lines of streets and houses, especially in the southern portion, can be distinctly traced. The stone which had attracted Mr. Smith's attention I found lying down in the north-eastern corner, and the inscriptions were certainly very fairly clear, though parts of the stone had been broken off. They ran in lines, and consisted of symbols which in some cases imitated natural objects and in others were evidently conventional. No doubt they form a sort of pictorial alphabet, which, gradually struggling from the earliest manner of recording events by rude pictorial representations, uses the phonetic value of the things represented to form the sounds of verbs, adjectives, &c., in this much resembling the Mexican alphabet, of which perhaps the most familiar example is the pictorial pater noster compiled by the Jesuit missionaries soon after the conquest of that country, and in which a prickly pear (pahte) is the first symbol. Legs and arms of men, horses' heads, birds, circles,

squares, and other more complicated figures were common.

As soon as I had had a look at this stone, Raschid and his party arrived, and I set them to work to cut a gash down the centre of the big mound near the river, whilst I reconnoitred the ground more closely in order to see if I could find a place which would prove more promising. In the centre of the southern side was a Roman gateway, and a short way outside the ruins of another, where a large block was lying which had the holes remaining in which the hinges of the gate had been inserted. At the south-east corner were traces of another entrance, which had been flanked by huge slabs on which the outlines of winged quadrupeds were still dimly visible.

Whilst I was looking at these, Raschid came to tell me he had found something on the top of the mound on the side facing the river; I went with him, and found traces of a building, and put a few men to work there,

and we soon came upon the remains of an old Roman bath, paved with a rude mosaic, and with the remains of charred wood still in the furnaces. Roman remains, however interesting, were not what we were looking for, therefore I sent the men back to join the others who were progressing well with the trench I had ordered to be cut, and which was on the inner face of the mound.

Meanwhile the first stone had been raised up on its end, and I employed myself some time in tracing the characters—these tracings were afterwards spoilt by wet, but it does not much matter, as Mr. Henderson has had photographs taken which are now at the British Museum.

Whilst employed about these, Daher, who had come over, told me he had found some more stones with pictures on them. Going with him I first found a small square slab of black basalt on which was sculptured, though rudely, with a great deal of life and truth an antelope. This slab was lying loose amongst the stones

of the later city. A short way from it were two large slabs with bas-reliefs on them, just peering above the ground. One of these was also in black basalt, and had till recently been very perfect, and had represented a procession of figures much resembling those on the Nineveh sculptures, but the upper part had lately been broken off so that only the lower parts of the bodies and legs remained. On making inquiries as to how this had been done I found that the old Vandal, Shaykh Hosayn, had made millstones out of it, as it was the handiest and most suitable material in his idea for that purpose.

The other slab, which was of granite, was about the same size, but six feet away from, and at right angles to, the first. I determined to make a start at these the next morning, and in the meantime hurried the men on in the trench. Here our labours were not very fortunate, as all the treasure-trove was a piece of a cuneiform brick, and some small fragments of inscribed stones; but towards the

end of the day we came to the core of the mound, which was composed of large blocks of rough and unhewn stones, a sort of limestone, which had probably formed part of the original fortifications of the place. The mound was evidently partly built on purpose, and partly formed of the accumulation of the *débris* of ages, as a large proportion of the soil was formed of broken pottery of various colours.

When the time came for the men to stop work—which was only when it was necessary to let them go in order to reach their homes before dark—I was quite astonished, so quickly had the time flown away.

When I got back I was ready for my dinner, and so apparently was Nimshi too, for when my back was turned she made a clean sweep of what I had got ready; just as I was chastising her for this old Shaykh Hosayn came to pay me a visit, and to inform me that he intended to sup with me. Luckily my larder was pretty well stocked, though the gazelle, owing to my having omitted to gralloch him before our

arrival, was too musky for me to eat, though it was fully appreciated by Raschid and the servants, to whom I made it over.

After supper, or dinner, Shaykh Hosayn had a long talk with me, and told me that wild boar were common, and were frequently to be found on the islands which divide the river into numerous channels, indeed that in the night time they came on the mainland, and often did great damage to the crops. Next he began about the ruins, and wanted to know what we were looking for, and said that if it was gold he would be entitled to it, as the land was his. I told him all the gold that had been hidden there was gone long ago, and we were only trying to find out the history of the town that had existed there 3,000 years before, and was even then an old town. This set him off about Suliman ibn Daood, and inquiring if he had ever been there, and if he had built the town. Solomon, I said, might have been there, but that we knew of it as an important city long before the days of Solomon, and that very

probably it was already built in the days of Abraham. This satisfied him, as he had heard of Abraham having been at Orfa, and thought it very possible that he might have paid a visit to this city if it was then in existence. This tickled his pride very much, and I afterwards found it retailed to every one as an indubitable fact that Abraham had been here.

As we left next morning for the ruins I gave orders to have a look-out kept for any boar that might appear on the islands, and it was not long before a boy who was attending cattle came running up breathlessly to tell me not only of one, but several, pig being about.

I jumped on Sultan, taking my Henry rifle, and was followed by Daher on the Count with my fowling-piece, whilst a heavy rifle was carried by one of the villagers. Shaykh Hosayn and some of his friends followed to see the sport. Soon after we got on the islands *Khansir, Khansir!* was ejaculated breathlessly by the boy who had come to tell us of the

pig, and looking in the direction he was pointing, I saw the crest of a huge boar showing through the tufts of grass and bush; he was just on the move, and too near an unfordable part of the river for which he was evidently making for us to cut him off by riding, so I slipped off my horse and taking as good an aim as I could under the circumstances, fired. He went off at a rush, but I thought I heard the thud of the bullet, so hoped he was wounded; he got to the river and plunged in, and tried to swim to the eastern shore where he would have been practically safe from us, but though swimming strong he could not stem the current, and was swept away to another island lower down, where he landed and made running to pass by the village. We had to go a long way round for a ford and I was afraid he would get away from us, but by hard galloping over some precious rough stuff, full of holes of porcupines and jerboa, I collared him, and fired right and left into him as I galloped alongside; one bullet missed and the other hit, and he

turned sharp and made a charge at the horse Sultan, who fully entered into the fun, was quicker than he, and we passed just astern of his tail. He made another dive into the river and swam across another branch to another island; as before, we had to go round, but I had the pleasure of seeing that he was getting very groggy, and had lost much of his speed, so I soon came up to him again; and having reloaded, gave him both barrels behind the shoulder, one conical expanding, and one round No. 12; this staggered him, and he rolled over, but got up again and stood at bay. By now a whole lot of people had assembled armed with matchlocks, spears, swords, sticks, and stones, and were in a circle round us, but at a respectful distance. When they saw the boar roll over they rushed in upon him, but soon moderated their ardour when they saw him get up looking very vicious.

He was a grand specimen of pluck and fury, as he stood rolling his fierce red eyes, and churning his tusks, whilst huge masses of foam

flecked his sides and mingled with the blood flowing from his wounds.

Though it was a thing to admire it would have been cruel to let him remain any longer in pain, so dismounting from my horse, I walked up to him and gave him the *coup de grâce* by a bullet through the brain.

No sooner was he dead than the mob that had been afraid to approach him whilst alive rushed in and began abusing him, pelting him with stones, and sticking spears into him. This I objected to, as although their nominal Mohammedanism prevented their eating pig's flesh, it did not prevent a wild boar being much appreciated at Aleppo, where I intended sending the body. Although abusive of their dead enemy, they managed to control their disgust sufficiently to steal the tusks, which were a very good pair.

Piggy being dead, I went to my hut to have some tiffin, and let the horses have a feed and a rest, before going back to the ruins. I had scarcely finished, and was smoking a

quiet pipe with the Shaykh when a great hullabaloo announced another pig on the islands. The horses were soon ready, and we went after him; both horses were excited and the Count bucked Daher off, but there was no time to wait for him, and I rode with Shaykh Hosayn as hard as we could after the boar who was heading for the ruins. We were gaining on him fast, but he went through the irrigated ground apparently swimming in the mud, where the horses could not follow, so we had to make a long détour and Shaykh Hosayn and some of his friends who had joined got thrown out. I saw *El Khansir* get out of the mud and go into the ruins, whence all the work-people cleared out as if possessed; as I got into the ruins, pig went out on the north side; Sultan went like a bird over the granite blocks of the Roman town, in a sort of steeple-chase excitement, but when I got clear of the stones the pig was not to be seen. Shaykh Mohammed (head of a village near) had just arrived and told me that the

boar was hidden in one of the numerous water channels of which the gully was full, and although he and his followers would not come down with me, pointed very nearly where he was. I rode down to look for him, but could not find him for some time and was almost giving him up as a bad job when, as I jumped one of the channels where it was much covered with grass, he sprang up almost between Sultan's legs. He turned back, and I turned after him, but dared not fire as a lot of people were in line; the pig then came round again and charged and I had to jump over him in order to clear him. This rendered Sultan almost wild with excitement, and I had to quiet him down before I could get away again after the pig, who made his way back to the islands, and then, swimming the main stream of the river, escaped safe and sound.

I now rode back to the ruins, and found that work had got on fairly, though not much had been found except a few small pieces of broken stones much defaced; the second

bas-relief was partly uncovered, and showed the heads of two large figures. Shaykh Mohammed introduced himself to me, and said he had come over to ask me to go and dine with him the next day. He was a tall, slender Arab, beautifully dressed, and clean, a great contrast to Shaykh Hosayn, who was a fat, dirty old gentleman, and half a Kurd by descent. I promised to go over the next afternoon, and Shaykh Mohammed said he would send out men to see if any gazelle were near, as if there were we could have a run with the greyhounds.

When we got back to the camp, I found Daher had, when he fell off the Count, smashed the butt of my fowling-piece; this was rather a bit of bad luck, as it was one I had made at Aleppo to replace that broken near Rusta.

I found all the owners of mules and camels making a great stir about taking the boar I had shot in the morning into Aleppo. They all said they would do anything to oblige me, and it was only that they were afraid of being

seen to carry a pig through the streets of Aleppo. This I answered by packing him up in a corn sack, and so at last persuaded a man to take him. I took the same opportunity to send in my gun, and a letter to Schaefer.

Shaykh Hosayn again invited himself to supper, and afterwards asked me to go and visit one of the villagers who had been wounded by a bullet in the thigh. I complied, though what was to be done I could not make out, as the wound was over six weeks old. I found the bullet still in, but flesh had grown over it, so that all that was to be done was to keep the wound clean, and let it heal by itself. I told him he should have nourishing food, and this laid me open to being pestered by his father and mother begging from me on every opportunity, although they were prosperous people, possessing half a dozen camels, and a good number of cattle.

As I was dressing next morning I heard the village dogs baying, and the Shaykh came and told me that they were round a gigantic

boar, on an island close to the village. I seized my rifle, rushed out, and soon came to where I could see them. The dogs were all keeping at a respectful distance, and as the boar charged any one, so sure that one bolted, whilst the others closed up and howled the louder. I got well within a hundred yards of the boar, and on the other side of a shallow channel, and then fired. The dogs all bolted, but I heard the bullet hit, and saw the boar turn over with his legs in air. I jumped down, and ran across the channel, and to where I had seen the pig, but on arriving there found he had rolled down a steep bank into the main stream, which was sweeping him away rapidly. He tried in vain to stem it and get to land again, but he soon sank, and was drowned. The day turned out rainy, and wet, and the hardy Arabs refused to work at the ruins, so I had nothing to do but to pay my visit to Shaykh Mohammed.

He had assembled quite a party to meet me, and we yarned and smoked most comfortably

and amicably for a long time. The only thing rather overpowering was his wanting me to nurse his baby, which was swathed up in swaddling clothes that did not seem to have been undone for months.

One man was a returned prisoner from among the Russians, and he was very bitter against them for having made him work whilst he was a prisoner of war. Otherwise he did not seem to have been treated unkindly. Much of the conversation turned upon the Circassians, and very great bitterness was evinced against some who had settled at Mombedj (Hierapolis) a day's march to the south, and all urged me to go there in order to see for myself how badly they were behaving.

I spent two days more working at the ruins, and had some more good chases after pig, but though I wounded four, did not have the luck to bag another. On one occasion a wounded boar went into a sort of brake on an island, and came out with a sounder of fourteen ; these I chased until they got into the main stream

after a run of about six miles over country which gave them every advantage, consisting as it did of rocks and swamps almost impassable for horses. Another I had wounded, and had got close up alongside and regulated Sultan's speed to his so as to have a good shot, and was just going to fire, when Daher came blundering up on the Count, firing a wretched little revolver he had got from the Chaldean, between me and the pig; and it was as much as I could do to avoid shooting him or the Count. Shaykh Hosayn occasionally tried to follow me but his seat was not adapted for jumping; having been well shaken, and got a bad black eye, he left galloping after Khansir to the Ingleez.

CHAPTER XIV.

A promise—A peculiar spring—Ali—No impression—Mark of his thumb—Ras Ali—Stealing cattle—The same story—Mohammed Pasha's—Bab again—A supper—Christmas Dinner—Curious stories—A telegram—The Bishop of Aintab—His hat—An attentive nurse—The Maronite church—No architect—The heavy roof—Either party—Mr. Malet—Woodcock—Elias—A charge of murder—His innocence—The Greek consul—Justice—English Governor-General—Olive trees—A cunning headman—Zeyteyn affair—Frozen to death—A besieged Kaimacan—A sword of honour—Visit the citadel—The ragged army—The galleries—Aleppo houses—Carvings and paintings—Persian carpets—Tawdry gewgaws—New Year's Day—Punch and Judy—Plenty of Mules.

If I was to keep a promise made to Schaefer that I would be back at Aleppo on Christmas day it was now time for me to start; so, leaving Raschid to carry on the excavations, we left on the 23rd of December so as to arrive on the day itself.

When we started I made a small détour to say good-bye to Shaykh Mohammed and drink a farewell cup of coffee. He urged me very much to come and stay with him if I came back, and when I left accompanied me some way. Just after leaving his tent I remarked the spring from which his people drew their water as being very peculiar. It seemed as if a piece of rock had been torn out of the solid mass and the water came from the scar.

About this he told me the following story: Many years ago the people who lived in the city were very heathens and given to all manners of wickedness and abomination and their ill-fame spread so far that a Mohammedan saint and warrior called Ali received orders in a dream to destroy them and their city.

At first he tried to enter into the city and slay the inhabitants with his sword and spear, but the walls were too strong and high, and their summits crowded with soldiers who cast javelins at him and shot at him with bows.

Finding that he could make no impression on the place when close by, he withdrew out of range of their engines of war and came to the place where the spring now is. Stooping down he tore up a piece of rock and flung it at the city, but it fell short. This piece still remains with marks of his fingers on it; it is the piece of the outer gateway with the marks of hinges and other cuts on it. One is said to be the mark of his thumb and three others those of his fingers. He now nerved himself to greater efforts, and pelted the place with rocks until it was destroyed. The spring flows from where he tore up the first piece, and is called in commemoration of the event Ras Ali.

If Ali hove the stone as far as he is said to have done, he would easily carry off the prize for putting the weight at any modern athletic meeting. The distance is over two and a half miles and the stone's weight must be over a ton. As we wished each other good-bye the Shaykh again begged me to go to

Mombedj as the Circassians were giving great trouble there, stealing the Arabs' cattle and preventing them from cultivating their ground. I promised that either I would go myself or get the English consul to send some one to see what could be done to arrange matters.

I now rode on and soon caught up the mules, and at two or three villages we passed through the same story about the Circassians was told me, and I was asked why I was going away without having visited Mombedj, as unless something was done and that speedily there would be fighting and bloodshed, for the Arabs had put up with the Circassians so far only because they had been sent into the country by the Sultan, but would not be able to endure their wrong-doings much longer; so that unless the government interfered they would be forced to take the matter into their own hands.

In the evening we arrived at Mohammed Pasha's and were welcomed by his wife in

the absence of her husband who was said to be away visiting some other villages which belonged to him. After supper Mohammed himself arrived, and said he was sorry to have been away when we arrived and that I should have sent to him to say when I was coming, as, knowing that I was fond of dogs, he had intended to make me a present of a brace of greyhounds. Next day we rode into Bab, where I was accommodated as before at the club room, and where smoking and coffee were even more in vogue by the members than on my first visit; and though the Turk usually follows the motto of early to bed and early to rise it was past ten o'clock before I was left alone. I entrusted the cooking of my supper to the servant, as I had to stop and speak to the people who were in the room. He asked if I would have sardines as well as a fowl, and as I answered yes, he fried sardines and fowl all together, and burnt them so much into the bargain that even the dog would not eat the mess, so I

had to make my supper off bread and coffee. On Christmas morning I started early and rode fast into Aleppo, where I found Schaefer out of bed and much better, but not able to get about at all.

He had received the wild boar all right, and had part of it and a turkey ordered for our Christmas dinner. He had a very curious story to tell which had been going the rounds of the bazaars. The English were said to have sent six ironclads to Iskanderûn and to have landed ten thousand troops there. An English Governor-General was also reported to be on his way to Aleppo, and part of the troops were to escort him up. This had caused great excitement, and Mr. Thabet, the dragoman who was in charge of the consulate during Henderson's absence at Zeyteyn, had telegraphed to the vice-consul at Iskanderûn to know if it were true. The answer was amusing:—"Of course not; it would have been announced officially; and do you think I should have been such a fool as not

to have reported it if it had occurred?" The foundation of the rumour was the presence of the *Rapid* and of two English yachts at Ayas. One yacht was, I believe, the *Sunbeam*, and the other a small craft with Captain Baird and a party of friends on board, who had gone there for the sake of the shooting.

Soon after my arrival the English Bishop of Aintab came in and we read service together; he had learnt all his English out of the Prayer-book, and tried to chant the "Venite," which was rather trying. The Bishop had originally been an Armenian priest and had joined the English Church, and afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Aintab by Bishop Gobat at Jerusalem. He was stopping at Aleppo on business about some money which had been subscribed in England to build his church at Aintab and about which there was some difficulty. He was a very pleasant man indeed and we all liked him very much, but there was one thing which

caused us a great deal of amusement, and indeed it was hard to avoid smiling at it even when he was present.

When he returned to Aintab after having become a bishop in the English Church, he thought himself entitled to wear the same head-dress as the Armenian bishops. They objected to him doing this as they considered him a heretic, and on his persisting appealed to the Sultan at Constantinople. The Sultan, after long and weighty deliberation and discussion with his ministers, decided that it was wrong for him to wear the same hat as an Armenian Bishop, but still that his position as an Anglican Prelate was such that he was entitled to a distinctive head-dress. To solve the difficulty they designed a special hat for him, and had one made and sent to the consul at Aleppo to be given him. This hat, which he wore on Sundays and holidays, was a sort of stiff biretta of violet velvet with a little gilt button on the top; on other occasions he wore a fez which contrasted curiously with

his ecclesiastical garments. Both violet cap and fez always recalled the story, and caused one to be amused at the idea of a number of Mohammedans discussing and settling a portion of the vestments of an Anglican divine. Gabriel I found had been a most attentive nurse to Schaefer, whilst he had been ill, looking after him and anticipating his every wish.

The day after my return I received a message from the Maronite Bishop who had been building a new church, which was objected to by the inhabitants of houses in the vicinity as being unsafe, asking me to survey it. The master of a school, the walls of which were only a few feet from those of the church, was particularly urgent to have the church pulled down, as he said the parents of his pupils objected to their attending the school for fear of the church falling down and burying them in its ruins. The Bishop had been his own architect, and the foreman of works was an Aleppo mason, who could put stone upon

stone well enough, but did not seem to have any idea as to what should be the relative strength of the different parts.

One part of the church, the sanctuary, had already fallen, and had been rebuilt on the same lines. In vain I urged that I was no architect, that it was absurd to expect a sailor to know anything about building churches. It was all no good, and I had to succumb to the united entreaties of both parties, of those who wished to pull the church down and of those who wished it to stand. There was nothing for it but to go, and trust to common sense to get out of the business with some credit. I found many of the arches out of truth, stones split by the superincumbent weight, and the walls out of the perpendicular. As far as I could see, the whole mischief was caused by an enormously heavy vaulted roof which was in places over ten feet thick, and which was out of all proportion to the strength of the walls and columns. I recommended the Bishop to build a good number of buttresses to support the walls, and

then to take the roof off and replace it by a lighter one.

This, as it afterwards turned out, did not satisfy either party; the bishop had not enough money left to do what I recommended: and the other side, who were principally Roman Catholics, thought that if the church were pulled down the Maronites would be forced to join their congregations and thereby render them both richer and more powerful. When I came back from the church I found Mr. Thabet had received a telegram from Henderson saying that Mr. Malet, secretary to the embassy, was to arrive at Aleppo shortly, and that he was to make preparations accordingly.

The weather had now set in very cold with hard frosts at night, and all the mountains covered with snow. The woodcock in consequence had come down into the gardens around the town for shelter, and it was not difficult to get six or seven couple in a morning or afternoon stroll. I soon

persuaded Schaefer to get about again, and he rapidly improved after a few rides; so we began to look about for mules and men to leave Aleppo. Our first search was for a cook, to replace the fellow we had discharged at Hamah. Several came, but some could not cook and others wanted higher wages than we were disposed to give; at last we got hold of a worthy old fellow named Elias, who was a very fair cook and had a good character. He had been seventeen years in one place, and after that he had been for some time in the service of Dr. Bischoff, whom he had left on account of his son being in trouble, which had so upset the poor old man that he had neglected his work.

The story about his son as told by himself was this. His son was coming home late one night when a drunken man passed him flourishing a knife; just after he had passed him he commenced quarrelling with two men, and Elias' son saw him fall and the two men run away. Elias' son went up and found that

he was dead, and had been stabbed through the heart with his own knife. On Elias' son reporting this to the police, they had put him into prison on the charge of murder, as they could not find the two men who had actually committed the deed.

The poor fellow had been nearly two years in prison on this charge, without having even been brought up for examination. His father had done all he could to get the case dismissed or his son tried, as he said he had witnesses who could prove his innocence. Elias had tried petitions, bribes, and all the ways and means open to him to effect his object. At last, failing to get anything done by the Turkish officials, he had resort to the consular body, and being a Greek Christian went to the Greek consul to ask his assistance. The consul said he could do nothing without money, and took all that remained of Elias' savings, some twenty or thirty pounds, and when he had pouched the plunder laughed the poor old man to scorn.

Elias hearing that we were in want of a

cook, thought that perhaps if he was engaged by Englishmen his case might be taken up by the English consul, and that his son's deliverance would be ensured. We did not hear all this till just before we left, but as Mr. Henderson promised to attend to the case, I hope long ago justice has been done.

Mr. Malet and Henderson both arrived the same day, and as Malet was to arrive first, I rode out to meet him. Khamil Pasha sent out his son, and a crowd of officials; Mr. Thabet and the Consular Kawasses, and a number of zaptieh also went, so that there was a very large concourse to do him honour; and I am sure all the populace thought that at the very least the English Governor-General was coming at last. We did not meet him so soon as we had expected, and by the time we returned we found Henderson had arrived, so I was not able to go out and meet him too.

Malet had been through Palestine, and at Baalbek and Damascus, where he had arranged

about the zaptieh who had attacked our muleteer, and also had been picking up information about the country generally. In one place he found the people cutting down their olive-trees, because the amount at which the tax upon them was assessed was more than the whole value of the crop; and in another the headman had built a very fine new house out of bribes which he had received from people who tried to escape the conscription. He had not seemed at all ashamed of this, and described how he did it with great glee and gusto. When men were drawn to serve in the army, he had told them to give him amounts varying according to their wealth, and then go away and hide in out-of-the-way places until the parties sent round to collect the conscripts had gone away, when he would send and give them notice that they might return. When the recruiting officers came he betrayed all these people to them, so they had both to pay, and to go as soldiers, whilst he pocketed the money, and also got rid of

probable enemies. Mr. Malet had come to Aleppo to inquire into the Zeyteyn affair, and to confer with Henderson as to what was to be done in the matter.

Henderson's report of his journey made me very glad indeed that I had gone to Karchemish instead of going with him, as the roads had been very bad, and for a long way they had had to walk through deep snow; and two zaptieh who had been riding with the post to Constantinople, had been frozen to death near Marash. The insurgents who had been made prisoners were being very cruelly treated, and Khamil Pasha after a great deal of doubling and twisting, was induced to order the Kaimacan to be sent down to Aleppo under arrest to stand his trial, and the prisoners to be better treated. When the order got to Zeyteyn, however, the populace had taken the matter into their own hands, liberated the prisoners, and were be sieging the Kaimacan in his own house.

Khamil, seeing that he was getting into trouble about the way in which he had managed

the affair, and for allowing the Kaimacan to exceed his authority, got up an address to himself thanking him for his wisdom and justice, and the ability he had displayed in not allowing a small insurrection to spread and involve the country in all the horrors of civil war. This address was to be accompanied by a sword of honour, and the first subscription on the list was twenty pounds from his own secretary. This amount it turned out was paid by Khamil himself, and was intended to be an inducement to all the government officials to subscribe.

With Mr. Malet we went again to visit the citadel, and I was much amused by the ragged soldiers being hidden away in their quarters so as not to be seen, whilst their places were taken by neatly-clad men from the barracks. Some of these however were mere recruits, and were not to be trusted to go through their manual, so they were fallen in four deep without arms, and Peabody-Henrys were piled in front of them. The relative

numbers had not been accurately calculated, as there were only four muskets to every six men. The climax of the absurdity was reached when Malet, in spite of the officers who were showing us round trying indirectly to prevent him, walked into the place where the ragged army was stowed away. On neither this nor the former occasion were we able to get into the chambers, dungeons, and galleries which occupy the centre of the hill, and are said to be very curious and have many interesting inscriptions. The galleries are reported to lead in some cases to a long distance outside the town, so that even when the citadel was closely blockaded its garrison was enabled to maintain communication with the outside world. All these had had their entrances closed some years before by order of the government, and it was said that since that time no one had visited them.

Another day we visited with him some of the best of the Aleppo houses, built some two or three hundred years ago, when the trade

of the east and west used still to pass through the town. This was very interesting. We went along narrow and dirty alleys flanked by blind walls, only occasionally broken by a latticed balcony, built out to allow the members of the harem to see what might be going on in the streets, and stopping at some mean-looking door would knock. The door being opened, we passed by a narrow passage into the courtyard, and there for the first time became aware of the ancient grandeur of the houses.

The centre of the courtyard was usually occupied by a fountain, and orange-trees and other plants. In the middle of one side was a large alcove, reaching right up to the roof with a handsomely carved and painted canopy projecting some way in front. The floor of this alcove, which was usually raised some two or three feet above the level of the court-yard, was paved with mosaics in coloured marbles, and its ceiling and sides painted and gilded in panels. This was the summer

lounge of the family, and the principal reception rooms were on either side. These rooms were adorned in much the same manner, with the addition of carved cupboards and lattices to the windows. No two panels were alike, but the panels which corresponded with one another in their respective positions were sufficiently near in their resemblance to show that all were part of one harmonious design. Outside in the courtyard the windows were guarded by stone lattices, and they likewise all agreed whilst differing. The wealth of fancy that the designers possessed must have been marvellous. The colours are now all quiet and chaste, and where restoration has been attempted the crude reds, greens, and yellows which have been used have a painful effect upon the eyes. The contents of the houses matched them well; old Persian carpets, Oriental china and silversmiths' work, Indian and Chinese carvings of priceless value. These their owners, who know their value in Europe, will not part with easily,

but they regard them little, giving the place of honour in their affection to tawdry gewgaws and pictures of modern Europe, which, to judge from their appearance, must usually have been picked up at a country fair. All the artists who decorated these houses have died out and have left no successors behind them; indeed, I believe that it is only at Damascus that the art of Oriental, or Saracen, decoration still survives.

On New Year's Day there was a general interchange of visits between all the members of the consular body; and in the evening Schaefer and I went to a party at Dr. Bischoff's. There was a good deal of Arab or Turkish music and singing, which is not pleasant to European ears, the only amusing thing being a man who dressed up his two hands as puppets, and lying down on his back, was covered with cloaks so as to conceal all but his dressed-up hands. These he made perform a very clever sort of Punch and Judy business, and when people tried to approach them

too close, dealt out hearty buffets. I believe the same sort of thing goes on in the harems, but there the performance is usually, from what I have been told, obscene.

Schaefer being now all right we made up our minds to start as soon as possible, and made inquiries everywhere as to mules for our servants and baggage. These, we were assured, there were plenty of in the town, and that as it was the dead season of the year we should find them easily and cheaply.

CHAPTER XV.

A set of Christians—Their squabbles—Patience and upbraidings—Make a start—Jibreen—A good spear—Busy ploughmen—Tedif—Uncivil Shaykh—Water-wheel—A mob of Circassians—Bitterly cold—Lodged in a stable—A cavalry commander—A large farm—Unrelenting hatred—Not even a donkey—Not a single cigarette—Narration of his woes—Another story—Covered with ice—A remedy for toothache—A hospitable Shaykh—A string of camels—The Sultan's intimate friend—Not an officer—A Cypriote Jew—Flattery—Music—Dancing—Games—A new greyhound—Underground canal—Fifteen gazelle—Dogs throw up—Revolver practice—The last duties—Where are the dogs?—The truant's return—Waterfowl—Surly Circassians—A warm welcome.

LEAVING Aleppo was not so easy as it appeared, for muleteers were afraid to go eastward without being engaged for a return journey, for fear of being impressed into the Government service, or perhaps said they were, in order to command a

higher price. After a great deal of trouble we managed to engage a set of Christians natives of Mardin, but had to wait two days before they put in an appearance. When at last they did arrive they said they had no rope to lash the loads on the mules, and had spent their advance, so we had to give them money to buy some. They at last made up the packages, brought up all the mules and began loading; but the money they had been given to buy rope they had spent in drink, and they all quarrelled as to which mule should carry which load. One fellow loaded his mule, and then sat down and cried; another, whilst he was not looking, put the load intended for his own animal on top of that of the weeping man. Then there was a fight, not a dangerous one, but much scratching and hair pulling, and both loads came off. The man who was supposed to be the chief amongst them was as bad as any, and wanted to bring more mules than were necessary.

We tried to put up with this as long as possible, in the hopes that we might get clear of the town, and that then things would shake down, and by camping a short way out to let the men get sober, we might be able to make a fair start in the morning. But patience and upbraidings were alike of no avail, and at two in the afternoon we were compelled to give up all idea of starting; and sent them away, retaining one mule as a hostage until they repaid the money advanced.

Two days more were consumed in fruitlessly trying to get transport, and Malet said we should never get away at all; at last, on the very day he left for Iskanderûn, the man who had been to Jerablus with me came back and engaged to go as far as Orfa with us; and so we managed to make a start that same afternoon.

We did not go far the first evening, our zaptieh—we were lucky enough to get the same man who had been to Jerablus with

me—finding us comfortable lodgings for the night in a village called Jibreen, about six miles from Aleppo. The Shaykh gave us a room in his own part for ourselves, and the muleteers and their animals were quartered about on different families. This village was large in appearance, but had not much population, as each family had a separate inclosure surrounded by huts, mostly consisting of a single room each, or at most of "a but and a ben."

One of these huts might be the kitchen, others living or sleeping rooms, others empty, and some were employed as stables and granaries.

The old Shaykh, noticing some spears we had had made at Aleppo in the hopes of getting some pigsticking when we got to the Euphrates again, said to Schaefer, "Oh! you have a good spear, now if you have a good horse you don't want anything more, because you can rob any one who is not so well provided as you are." When we argued about a man with a spear being liable to

be shot, he said that a spear never missed fire, whilst a gun or a pistol often did, and a man with a sword could have no chance against one with a lance.

The Shaykh was a clever old fellow, and said he seldom went into Aleppo, as if he did, and was known to be fairly well off, very likely some offence would be fastened on him and he would be thrown into prison until he obtained his freedom by bribery.

Next morning we were delayed by a mule getting loose and bolting, and it was not caught until after a long chase, and it had got half way back to Aleppo. When it was caught we went on our way across fertile and level plains, the lake of es-Sabcha being away to the south-east of our route. People were busy, after their fashion, in ploughing and sowing, but often the yoke of bullocks were seen standing still and the ploughman fast asleep by their sides.

In the evening we arrived at Tedif, a town not far from Bab; though outwardly a pretty

place, being surrounded by trees, and with white-washed houses clustering round the hill on which it was built, it proved squalid and dirty in the extreme. We rode into the town and found it full to overflowing with Circassians, who had occupied almost all the available lodgings. We sent Mohammed the zaptieh to the Shaykh to ask if he could let us have lodgings for the night for ourselves and our beasts, but he returned an answer that he was ill and could or would do nothing for us. Mohammed then said he would, if we would wait, go and look for some proprietor who would be more civil than the Shaykh, or if we liked bring the Shaykh before us to apologise for his rudeness. We thought it best to leave the Shaykh alone, but let Mohammed go to look for quarters whilst we waited near a well.

This well had the water raised by the rudest and most primitive of water-wheels turned by a poor wretch of a blindfolded horse harnessed to the end of a long pole which was fastened to an upright piece of wood. This upright worked

in a sort of frame and had several sticks projecting from it at right angles, which worked into the spokes of the wheel, which was vertical.

The rope to which the buckets were fastened was made of twisted twigs, and the buckets which were fastened to it at distances of about five feet apart were made of goatskin and about the capacity of a fair sized slop basin. To prevent the precious fluid which was raised with so much care and toil from splashing out of the trough into which it fell, a large faggot was placed in it. From the trough the water ran into a sort of tank where the women filled their jars.

Whilst waiting a mob of Circassians crowded round us, who in every way seemed to have the mastery over the proper inhabitants. They were not contented with staring only, but must needs also touch and handle our stirrups and rifles. Sultan, whom I was riding, did not seem to approve of this intimate acquaintance with a Circassian populace, and began to kick and plunge until he had

secured for himself sufficient space. After a bit a man who seemed to have some authority among the Circassians came and drove the crowd away. He entered into conversation and asked permission to come and visit us in the evening, which, as we wished to hear some of the Circassian side of the argument, was readily accorded.

When Mohammed returned he had been unable to find any lodging for us or our beasts, so we went down to the outskirts of the town to find a place to pitch our tent. It was bitterly cold, and when the muleteers arrived they all protested against encamping as they said the animals would be so punished by the cold night as to be unable to travel the next morning. *Que diable allait il faire dans cette galère?* As we were almost despairing we had two offers of shelter, one from a Jew who offered us accommodation for ourselves, and the other from a Mohammedan who placed a stable at our disposal where both our horses and ourselves might be lodged. We decided on

accepting the latter, and found a roomy enough building, where there was a small raised place apart from the stabling, where we could spread out our beds, and have room to eat our suppers, and write up our journals. The muleteers got a place for their animals in another building belonging to the same man.

Our Circassian acquaintance was not long in finding us out, and brought some of his friends with him. The man we had first met said that he had been in command of one of the bodies of irregular horse which had been employed in Europe, and that he had been a a great loser by the war.

Before the war broke out he had been the possessor of a large farm which was worth over a thousand pounds, and although he had served during the war without pay, he had not received any compensation from the Turkish government when, in compliance with the Russian demands, he was deported into Asia. He said he still possessed the title-deeds of his farm, and wanted advice as to how he could

recover its value. Of course we were powerless to help him, and could only advise him to make his claim known to some European consul who might perhaps be able to induce his ambassador at Constantinople to lay it before the Porte. He said that as a child he had been driven from his native country by the Russians, and now when fairly prosperous their unrelenting hatred had forced him to become again a wanderer, and dependent on charity for his daily bread.

When he heard that we were going to Mombedj he told us that if he only had a horse he would go with us to visit his countrymen there; but that he, who a few short months before had commanded six hundred horsemen, now could not get even a donkey to carry him. Besides his pathetic lamentations he was a most importunate beggar, and ready to accept anything; saying that the allowance [1] paid to the Circassians by the government was not enough

[1] Five piastres a fortnight for adults and half that amount for children.

to keep body and soul together and that he could never afford even a single cigarette to smoke. This was very curious as he was well provided with cigarette papers, and once dropped a well-filled bag which had a suspicious resemblance to a tobacco pouch, which prevented our being over much moved by the narration of his woes, and though we allowed him to punish our tobacco, we did not offer to advance him money on his title-deeds.

When he had departed, the man the house belonged to came in with a long string of complaints against the Circassians : how they lived in other people's houses without paying for them ; dropped in to every meal without being invited; and if they could not get things by asking were not averse to a little stealing; and that our visitor was one of those most distrusted and feared among all that were living in the town. The townspeople were ordered to supply lodging, and a certain amount of food and money to their unwelcome guests, but the latter were not satisfied with what

was given them, and being well armed, having Winchester rifles in addition to their Circassian swords and knives, were masters of the situation.

Next morning we left Tedif after a night of by no means unbroken rest, as the horses of the owner of the stable, which were in another compartment, got loose two or three times and invaded that in which our horses were put, and neighing and kicking were the unvarying results. When morning broke we were rather anxious to see if our steeds had suffered in the fray, but luckily they were unharmed.

The gutters and puddles were all covered with ice, and a piercing north-east wind was blowing which chilled us right through, and we were very glad indeed of an invitation to take coffee at a village about an hour and a half from Tedif, and to get ourselves warm round a *mangal*[1] filled with hot coals. The

[1] A *mangal* is almost equivalent to the French *chaufrette*, but is usually larger and takes the place of the fireplace or stove of the European.

brother of our host was suffering from a bad toothache, and implored us to do something for him. I thought of the old remedy of pepper and spirit, and mixed one of their coffee cups full of brandy and red pepper, put some on a piece of rag and bound his head up. He told us that it was a very good thing and caused a pleasing sensation; and as his skin seemed as thick as that of a rhinoceros I hope it never did more, and also cured his toothache.

We let the mules get well ahead before we started again, and what with catching them up, and riding out on both sides to get points for taking angles, were able to keep moving sufficiently to prevent getting chilled again. Two hares were started and coursed, and one killed after a good run; and I was delighted to find that Sultan could, after the first hundred yards, get away from Schaefer's Masood.

In the evening we arrived at an Arab village where we were warmly welcomed by

the Shaykh, who gave us stabling for all our animals and offered us a house for ourselves; but we thought that our tent would be more comfortable, and declined. When our tent was pitched the Shaykh came to see us and it, and finding our cook making a fire and preparing for supper became quite excited, and said it was bad enough our not sleeping under his roof, but that the idea of our not eating with him was not to be tolerated.

When he had looked at our guns and pistols we went up with him to his house, where his sons were busy making all comfortable, and had coffee and pipes ready. Whilst we were drinking coffee a string of camels arrived loaded with corn. In charge of them was a man dressed in a semi-European style and wearing a sword, who said he was an officer, and talked largely about his travels. A pistol he was wearing he said he had bought at Strasbourg, and a lambskin coat at Naples. According to his own description he was intimate with all the crowned heads of Europe,

and was a most trusted and confidential servant of the Sultan. The corn the camels were carrying was for the supply of the garrison at Aleppo, and it was only because of his great influence and tact in dealing with people that he was employed on service so derogatory to his dignity. A zaptieh was waiting for him in the village with fresh horses, and he soon departed, leaving the camels to follow on next day.

The Shaykh's supper was very good, though we had to squat down round a common dish and use our fingers to fish out the morsels. After supper, coffee and pipes again came on the scene, and we began talking of all sorts of matters. The man who had said he was an officer turned out to be a Jew, and was contractor to supply the troops at Aleppo with grain; and so far from his being known to, and trusted by, everybody, had only lately come out of prison, where he had been confined on a charge of dishonesty. His present employment was attributed to his being a friend

and countryman of Khamil Pasha, the wali of Aleppo, who by birth was a Cypriote Jew, and had, after abjuring his original religion and becoming a Mohammedan, been tutor to one of the sons of the Khedive, and from that appointment had got into the Turkish civil service.

All present were loud in their condemnation of the present state of things, saying that bribery and corruption were worse than they had been ever before, and that the only hope for the future was the arrival of the English, which they were anxiously waiting for. This no doubt was to a great extent flattery, as they had heard the rumours about the English occupation of Iskanderûn, and seemed to think that the whole country was to be occupied, corrupt Pashas and officials swept away, and that the English were to come with money, roads, and railways in their pockets, and therefore henceforth life was to be enjoyable instead of, as hitherto, miserable and precarious. For the Sultan they seemed to have a sort of

hazy loyalty, but all the rest of the present system they wished to have swept away.

From politics we passed on to love, war, and the chase; and an Arab Paganini produced a one-stringed fiddle on which he scraped industriously whilst he sang a long improvisation on the English and their many virtues, on Arabs and their horses and dogs; and from time to time all the company, to whom the measure seemed familiar, joined in a sort of inarticulate chorus.

Another man brought out a reed pipe, and duets were the order of the day; the fun soon waxed fast and furious, and the usually staid Arabs would not be satisfied without a dance. A large fire was lit near our tent and we all trooped out. At first the musicians had to play whilst the others danced round and round in a circle singularly like some of the dances in vogue in the interior of Africa; but after a bit they too got so excited that they could no longer remain still, but flinging down their instruments, joined the

circle. The dancing went on furiously, accompanied by songs and clapping of hands; and Gabriel and all our men took part. At last they were so done that they had to stop. After a few minutes' rest they were again ready for fun, and began playing leapfrog, and wrestling. It was the oddest sight in the world to see these bearded men dressed in Arab shirts flying over each others' backs. Gabriel, boylike, joined in these sports also, and his baggy Eastern breeches did not fare well in the *mêlée* for they were split from clue to earring and rendered incapable of further service—much I believe to his delight, as he would now have an excuse for getting a pair of European trousers.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before the revels ended, and I was not sorry, as although I was well wrapped up and close to the fire, still sitting still on a frosty night was more dignified than comfortable. We were soon in our sleeping sacks and sound asleep; and could scarcely believe the Shaykh when

he came the next morning and told us it was sunrise.

We got up and went to his house where we found soup ready for breakfast. After breakfast a man came up with a fine large greyhound, which he gave to Schaefer, as he had not got one—Schelher having been given away at Aleppo to Mr. Nahoun, the second dragoman, owing to her being in an interesting condition which rendered her unfit to travel. The owner of the greyhound gave as a reason for giving away his dog, that his wife when he was away did not look after it, and that therefore he thought it would be better for it to be with us where it would always be sure of being fed.

After many farewells we got away and started for Mombedj. The road was dreary and uninteresting till we got within four miles of the place, when we came upon a wonderful underground canal which used to take water from a spring into a reservoir at the entrance into the ancient city. This

canal no one was able to tell us anything about, but the old shafts, now in many places blocked up, were thick all along the line it ran.

About two or three miles from the ruins we sighted a herd of fifteen large gazelle nearly three quarters of a mile from the road. Schaefer and I changed our saddles from the Count and Zaptieh which we were riding, and went after them with the greyhounds. Unfortunately we did not put the dogs into the slips, and they sighted the gazelle and went after them long before they ought, so that from the beginning there was no real chance. Richan, as the new dog was called, outran Nimshi at first, but soon tired and gave in. I then took him across a short cut towards two that had separated from the main body and were being pursued by Nimshi. The two dogs then ran bravely for about twenty minutes, Nimshi having rather the better of it, but at the end of that time, losing sight of their quarry owing to a small

rise in the ground, threw up, and were too dead beat to follow me when I passed them, although I tried to cheer them on after the gazelle which were only two or three hundred yards ahead. I went on after the two, who soon joined the main body again, and let me get pretty close up to them. After fifty minutes in all of hard galloping I got within about twenty yards of one that was rather behind the rest, and emptied my revolver at it, but without effect, the only result of the bullets being to urge the animals to greater speed. Sultan was beginning to show signs of the work, being covered with foam, but was still going as gamely as possible. I indulged him with a small pull whilst I reloaded my revolver, and the gazelle seeing that they were gaining on me slacked also. Another spurt and I was soon close up to them again, and tried blazing into the brown; the first shot made them all bound and set off if possible faster than ever, and, being afraid of damaging Sultan if I went on any

longer, I resolved to try one more shot and pull up. My surprise and joy were great when I saw one stagger and fall, and though he got up and went on again it was so slowly that I was able to ride up right alongside him and fire two shots *à bout portant*. One cut his spine in two, and the gallant buck lay down to die.

I was off my horse in an instant, and cut the gazelle's throat, and then loosening my girths I knee-haltered the Sultan and performed the last duties to the prey.

As I was doing this Schaefer came up; he had pursued the main body at first and had got up near enough to try a shot, and then had missed the direction, as they turned suddenly after passing a small rise. The gazelle was soon ready to carry, and I hoisted him up behind my saddle and remounted. The question now was, where was the road and where were the dogs? The gazelle had turned and doubled so many times that the first was difficult to remember, and as for

the dogs, it was impossible to say where they might be. We rode quietly back to the road and picked up the other horses, and transferred the gazelle to the back of Count. We then considered how the greyhounds were to be found, and thinking that as perhaps Richan might know the country he would go back to his old master's and take Nimshi with him, we were on the point of sending Mohammed back there to see, when the truants came trotting in looking very tired and done.

We now went to a hut near, where I got a drink of water and was able to wash my hands. This necessary cleansing having been performed I rode on into the ruins. At the entrance was a large tank into which the underground canal discharged itself, and which was crowded with waterfowl; just beyond I found the Circassian settlement. Many square stone huts had been built in the ruins and the ancient buildings were serving as quarries from which to draw the material. A certain idea of the

beautiful had entered into the builders' heads, for the doorposts and lintels were often formed of sculptured stones. The men looked at me with a scowl as if they would like to have robbed me if it had been worth while and there had been no chance of being found out. None would respond to my greetings, and I therefore rode on to the Arab settlement, where I found things very different. Our mules had already arrived, and the Shaykh and his family were warm in their welcomes; his people were assisting to unload our animals and pitch our tent, barley was being brought for them to eat, and, in a word, all that hospitality and good-will could suggest was being done.

END OF VOL. I.

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